

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

BOARD PACK

for

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Friday, 28 August 2026

8:30 am (NZST)

Held at:

Commodore Hotel

449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch

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AGENDA

CANTERBURY MAYORAL FORUM



Name:	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Date:	Friday, 28 August 2026
Time:	8:30 am to 2:00 pm (NZST)
Location:	Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch
Board Members:	Craig Rowley, Craig Mackle, Dan Gordon, Dr Deon Swiggs, Liz McMillan, Lydia Gliddon, Marie Black, Melanie Tavendale, Nigel Bowen (Chair), Phil Mauger, Scott Aronsen
Attendees:	Justin Tipa, Tania Wati, Alex Parmley, Angela Oosthuizen, Bede Carran, Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Hamish Riach, Hamish Dobbie, Jeff Millward, Nigel Trainor, Steve Gibling, Will Doughty, Ben Bateman, Maree McNeilly, Amelia Wilkins, Ann Fitzgerald
Apologies:	Stuart Duncan
Guests/Notes:	Susan Goodfellow (Item 2.1); John Bartels (Item 3.2); Marie Ward (for Diane McDermott) (Item 5.1); Jesse Burgess (Items 6.1; 6.2; 6.3)

1. Open Meeting

1.1 Welcome, karakia and apologies 8:30 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

1.2 Confirmation of agenda 8:35 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting 8:40 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

1.3.a	Minutes : Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 29 May 2026	9
1.3.b	Minutes : Canterbury Mayoral Forum - Regional Spatial Plan - 17 Jul 2026	19

1.4 Action List 8:45 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

1.4.a	Action List	24
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2. For Discussion

2.1 Canterbury Water Supply Schemes 8:50 am (30 min)

Nigel Bowen

Susan Goodfellow

Supporting Documents:

2.1.a	CMF Canterbury Water Supply Schemes Aug 2026.pdf	25
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3. For discussion and decision

3.1 Canterbury Water Management Strategy

9:20 am (15 min)

Dr Deon Swiggs

Supporting Documents:

3.1.a	CMF Canterbury Water Management Strategy Aug 2026.docx	41
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4. For discussion

4.1 Regional Public Service Commissioner

9:35 am (15 min)

Marie Ward

5. KAI - Morning tea

5.1 Kai - morning tea

9:50 am (20 min)

6. For discussion

6.1 Simplifying Local Government

10:10 am (15 min)

Nigel Bowen

7. For discussion and decision

7.1 Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan

10:25 am (30 min)

Hamish Dobbie

Supporting Documents:

7.1.a	CMF Regional Spatial Plan Aug 2026.docx	52
7.1.b	CMF Regional Spatial Plan Attachment 1 Aug 2026.pdf	64

7.2 Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus

10:55 am (10 min)

Hamish Riach

Jesse Burgess, Regional Deal working group

Supporting Documents:

7.2.a	CMF Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus Aug 2026.docx	65
7.2.b	CMF Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus Attachment 1 Aug 2026.docx	69

7.3 Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

11:05 am (15 min)

Dan Gordon

Jesse Burgess, Chair Climate Change Working Group

Supporting Documents:

7.3.a	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Aug 2026.docx	78
7.3.b	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 1 Aug 2026.docx	94
7.3.c	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Appendix 1a Aug 2026.docx	103
7.3.d	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Appendix 1b Aug 2026.pdf	112
7.3.e	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Appendix 1c Aug 2026.pdf	113
7.3.f	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 2 Aug 2026.docx	114
7.3.g	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 3 Aug 2026.docx	123
7.3.h	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 4 Aug 2026.docx	125

7.4 Canterbury Regional Energy Workstream update

11:20 am (10 min)

Hamish Riach

Jesse Burgess, Chair Regional Energy Steering Group

Supporting Documents:

7.4.a	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Aug 2026.docx	132
7.4.b	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 1 Aug 2026.pdf	138
7.4.c	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 2 Aug 2026.pdf	166
7.4.d	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 3 Aug 2026.pptx	193
7.4.e	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 4 Aug 2026.pptx	194

7.5 Before the Deluge 3.0

11:30 am (10 min)

Dr Deon Swiggs

Leigh Griffiths, General Manager Hazards, Canterbury Regional Council

Supporting Documents:

7.5.a	CMF Before the Deluge 3.0 Aug 2026.docx	195
7.5.b	CMF Before the Deluge 3.0 Attachment 1 Aug 2026.pdf	201

7.6 Regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions

11:40 am (10 min)

Dr Deon Swiggs

Judith Earl-Goulet, General Manager Catchment Implementation, Canterbury Regional Council

Supporting Documents:

7.6.a	CMF Regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions Aug 2026.docx	308
7.6.b	CMF Regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions Attachment 1 Aug 2026.pdf	310

7.7 Central government engagement

11:50 am (30 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

7.7.a	CMF Central government engagement Aug 2026.docx	311
7.7.b	CMF Central government engagement Attachment 1 Aug 2026.pdf	314

7.8 Chief Executives Forum report

12:20 pm (5 min)

Hamish Dobbie

Supporting Documents:

7.8.a	CMF Chief Executives Forum report Aug 2026.docx	316
7.8.b	CMF Chief Executives Forum report Attachment 1 Aug 2026.pdf	318

8. For information

8.1 Activities and Engagements May-August 2026

Maree McNeilly

Supporting Documents:

8.1.a	CMF Activities and Engagements Aug 2026.docx	319
8.1.b	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 1 Aug 2026.docx	321
8.1.c	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 2 Aug 2026.pdf	323
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8.1.e	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 4 Aug 2026.docx	329

9. General business

9.1 General business

12:25 pm (10 min)

9.2 Meeting review

12:35 pm (5 min)

9.3 Closing karakia

12:40 pm (5 min)

Kia tau te rangimarie ki runga I nga iwi o te ao
Haumi e
Hui e
Taiki e

Let peace reign on all the people of the world
Fixed
Bound as one

10. Kai - lunch

10.1 Lunch

12:45 pm (30 min)

11. Close Meeting

11.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 20 Nov 2026, 8:30 am

MINUTES (in Review)

CANTERBURY MAYORAL FORUM



Name:	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Date:	Friday, 29 May 2026
Time:	8:30 am to 12:49 pm (NZST)
Location:	Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch
Board Members:	Nigel Bowen (Chair), Marie Black, Craig Rowley, Craig Mackle, Dan Gordon, Dr Deon Swiggs, Liz McMillan, Lydia Gliddon, Melanie Tavendale, Phil Mauger, Scott Aronsen
Attendees:	Justin Tipa, Tania Wati, Alex Parmley, Angela Oosthuizen, Bede Carran, Ben Bateman, Hamish Dobbie, Hamish Riach, Jeff Millward, Nigel Trainor, Steve Gibling, Maree McNeilly, Amelia Wilkins
Apologies:	Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Will Doughty, Stuart Duncan, Ann Fitzgerald
Guests/Notes:	David Perenara-O'Connell for Stefanie Rixecker; Peter Kearney for Will Doughty; Deputy Mayors Vicki Gulleford, Fiona Harris, Philip Redmond, Victoria Henstock, Big Red Shefford, Richard Wilson, Scott Shannon, Sandy McAlwee, Rit Fisher, apologies from Rebecca Ryan & Iaeen Cranwell (Item 2.1); Jeremy Lightfoot (MCERT), Sarah Polaschek, Hemi Smiler, (DIA) (Item 2.1); apology from Diane McDermott (Item 5.1); Jesse Burgess (Items 6.2, 6.3, 6.4)

1. Open Meeting

1.1 Welcome, karakia and apologies

The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting and invited Justin Tipa to open the meeting with a karakia.

Apologies were noted from Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Will Doughty, Stuart Duncan, Deputy Chair Iaeen Cranwell, Deputy Mayor Rebecca Ryan, with David Perenara-O'Connell for Dr Stefanie Rixecker and Pete Kearney for Will Doughty.

Carmin Beck and Georgia Weaver assisted the Secretariat as Ann Fitzgerald was an apology.

1.2 Confirmation of agenda

The agenda was confirmed as presented and no items of general business were raised.

1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting

Canterbury Mayoral Forum 20 Feb 2026, the minutes were confirmed as presented.

The minutes were confirmed as presented.



Decision

The minutes were confirmed as presented

Decision Date: 29 May 2026

Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconded: Marie Black
Outcome: Approved

1.4 Action List

Due Date	Action Title	Owner(s)
30 Jun 2025	Action Status: On Hold	Maree McNeilly
30 Jun 2025	Action Status: On Hold	Nigel Bowen

2. For Discussion

2.1 Local Government reform

The Chair welcomed Jeremy Lightfoot, Chief Executive of the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions, and Transport (MCERT), Hemi Smiler and Sarah Polaschek, from Department of Internal Affairs, and the deputy mayors.

MCERT is gearing up to become a new organization and understand the role it will play. The organisation will undergo a two-step process; the first moving existing staff and roles under five executive leaders into the new organisation, the second will be a transition to an organisational design which supports successful delivery.

The importance of relationships and connections were emphasised to enable collaboration and crucial partnerships. Change provides many opportunities and it will be a balance to continue to introducing change coherently and at pace.

CMF members raised the following questions/points around:

- the sequencing of the Resource Management reform along with Local Government reform, especially concerning the geographical scope of the Spatial Plan
- whether there have been funds appropriated for Councils to use for court cases related to resource management reform

The representatives from Department of Internal Affairs shared information about the Head Start pathway. Information was shared about an upcoming guidance document on the Head Start proposal process, covering eligibility to submit, the balance of criteria and trade-offs, and the process for applications post submission.

It was noted that the Head Start pathway is only for councils proposing unitary solutions (other proposed structures to be considered in the backstop approach). The importance of including the areas of consensus between the parties in a proposal submission was highlighted as well as areas which require further resolution. It was emphasised that a submission should be the “best foot forward.”

It was noted that the proposal process was designed to be regionally and locally led.

There was a robust conversation between the meeting participants, with the following points emerging:

- It is possible for a single district to be proposed as a unitary, but it would require the support in the broader regional context and depend on how criteria are weighed (unknown at the moment).
- Catchment management is important.
- A proposal can be made to change regional boundaries but it's recommended to present a clear case on why it is appropriate as well as support from both regions.

- There was concern over the BAU requirement to continue with LTP processes. There have been signals that central government investigating how to support councils – potentially legislative change post-election to support an “LTP Light” in the 1-3 year range.
- Looking at spatial plan boundaries, it puts additional financial and resource pressure on councils who straddle regional lines. The complexity of the situations in Waitaki, Waimate, and Kaikōura were acknowledged.
- In September, Cabinet is expected to confirm who is in the Head Start pathway, with the remaining districts confirmed in May 2027. At this stage there are just the two pathways of Head Start or backstop, but it is always a possibility that additional pathways are introduced. It is unclear whether there is room for negotiation if a Head Start application is not accepted. The Head Start pathway is voluntary. Regardless of what happens, there will not be regional councillors after 2028 and Mayors will have to govern regional functions, although it is possible the mayors could be supplemented or replaced by commissioners.
- Those accepted into Head Start will get primary legislation and backstop applications will have to consider that existing legislative framework.
- The confusion around unwilling partners was acknowledged.
- There were questions regarding central government funding for both the Head Start and backstop processes with the answer that there was likely no financial support available in either process and that both pathways were expecting to be led at the regional and local levels.
- An important consideration for rates capping is setting up an organisation to be financially sustainable, so there is room for negotiation on what rates capping could look like or when it would start. This consideration could be included in the Head Start application.
- In the situation where a sub-regional unitary is accepted into the Head Start pathway, the broader region will still require delivery of regional responsibilities until the backstop process is complete.
- There isn't a rate-payer base threshold to unitary size as long as the organisation is financially sustainable.
- There is no explicit indication where other Government parties sit on this work.
- It was suggested that unitaries in a region could minimise duplication by sharing responsibilities (e.g. one does catchment for the region, and another does something else). This could be addressed in a Head Start proposal.
- It was recommended to approach the Head Start proposal to communicate what success looks like for the councils and people of Canterbury; articulate what success looks like in the executive summary on the front page.
- It was noted that some currently regional functions would be better suited across the South Island as a whole (e.g. natural hazard events) and recommended that if putting forward ideas to government, ensure strong cases behind them.
- The second spatial plan will include unitaries.
- Frame Head Start proposals as opportunities to improve.

Reflections around the table included:

- Interest in a collective Head Start proposal – need a strong collective proposal which shows collaboration with our neighbours and is too strong to oppose. United front to avoid fracturing communities (e.g. Three Waters).
- Need to work collaboratively on what will be best for Canterbury as a collective in the long-term, create a sense of belonging
- Opportunities

- o to unlock rural potential, if democracy is set up well; must avoid situation which leads to community boards without real power
- o to reinvigorate local government
- o for economy of scale for smaller districts
- o to show leadership of collaboration to the entire country
- How to best support those at the urban fringe around Ōtautahi Christchurch
- Approach a Head Start proposal from the perspective of what will strengthen regional capability and protect/enhance local voice
- The importance of catchments
- Short timeframe to make decisions and create document; engineer 1-3 options to table together
- Lack of community input is a huge risk
- Ensuring a strong approach for future generations
- We all want the same things – how do we get there?

CMF members expressed gratitude to Jeremy, Hemi, and Sarah for the clear and candid information.

Jeremy, Hemi, and Sarah left the meeting at 11:03am.

There was discussion around the table on how to proceed. The regional council offered support from the internal Strategic Transition Unit as well as any data required to assist with decision making. Resourcing is an issue, especially for smaller councils, and many councils have employed contractors to assist with the groundwork. This presents an opportunity to ensure they are working from the same information and challenge to avoid duplication.



Action

The Chief Executives to come up with some proposals for discussion by the Mayoral Forum.

Due Date: 11 Jun 2026
Owner: Hamish Dobbie



Action

Set up a facilitated meeting of the CMF and deputy mayors on Friday, 12 June to discuss a collective Head Start proposal.

Due Date: 12 Jun 2026
Owner: Maree McNeilly



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the key points from the Simplifying Local Government: Head Start pathway released on 5 May 2026
2. agreed in principle to progress a Head Start proposal for Canterbury to meet the Government's deadline of 9 August 2026

Decision Date: 29 May 2026
Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconder: Melanie Tavendale
Outcome: Approved

3. KAI - Morning tea

3.1 Kai - morning tea

4. For discussion and decision

4.1 Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan

The Chair invited the deputy mayors to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

Hamish Dobbie introduced the paper and summarised the work that has been done in relation to the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan as well as the options in the paper. The plan is an enabling, aspirational document which will also be used as a regulatory instrument.

Mayoral Forum members discussed regional versus sub-regional governance for a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee. There was also discussion around how to balance council representation, mana whenua representation, a government appointee and specialists. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu requested keeping the mana whenua delegation to 3-5 skilled governors who will vote on behalf of the ten Papatipu Rūnanga.

There was also discussion around wording the Terms of Reference (TOR) so that each council could choose their representative and that the TOR be updated to reflect that the Independent Chair and Ministerial Representative will have non-voting roles unless legislatively required.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. agreed to establish the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee
2. agreed the recommended governance option of representation from each council, mana whenua, central government appointments, and an independent chair
3. agreed to seek endorsement from each council for the recommended option for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, as part of the Process Agreement for the Regional Spatial Plan required under the Planning Bill
4. agreed to the urgent establishment of an Independent Programme Director noting the offer from the Greater Christchurch Partnership to provide some capacity and capability to this function in the interim period
5. agreed to host the independent Regional Spatial Plan Programme Director, the associated programme management office and secretariat at Christchurch City Council
6. noted the indicative cost of \$7-10 million, which is a very early estimate and includes a level of councils' current resources and budgets
7. noted that further refinement of the budget and funding options still need to be worked through
8. agreed that all Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan work should proceed on a no-regrets basis, that will remain relevant under future institutional arrangements
9. noted the interaction between spatial planning, resource management reform and local government reform and associated risks.

Decision Date: 29 May 2026
Mover: Nigel Bowen
Seconder: Marie Black
Outcome: Approved

4.2 Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028

Hamish Dobbie introduced the paper on the draft Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-28 and associated 'elevator pitch' and updated World-stage ready. The Plan outlines three priority areas and ten actions for the Forum's advocacy, leadership and collaboration.

There was a discussion around the importance of the 'elevator pitch' directing audiences to the Plan and World-stage ready. Mayor Gliddon provided an update to the draft for the elevator pitch, which members agreed with.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. approved the final draft Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026–2028, and delegated final approval for any minor changes to the Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for approval
2. approved the updated Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury elevator pitch, and delegated final approval for any minor changes to the Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for approval
3. noted the updates to Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready

Decision Date: 29 May 2026
Mover: Dan Gordon
Second: Marie Black
Outcome: Approved

5. For discussion

5.1 Regional Public Service Commissioner

Diane McDermott was an apology for the meeting

6. For discussion and decision

6.1 Canterbury Water Management Strategy update

Dr Deon Swiggs introduced the paper and led a discussion on whether there was a commitment from members to the establishment of the Local Leadership Groups. There were mixed opinions around the table; with some noting invigorated community involvement and others noting no loss in services since the Zone Committees were disestablished.

The Forum has requested that a paper to come back to the August Mayoral Forum meeting to provide advice about the CWMS and the local leadership groups in the context of the current reforms.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the update for January to March 2026 on work underway to implement the Canterbury Water Management Strategy
2. requested a further report on the context of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy in light of Simplifying Local Government and Resource Management reform progress, including the impact on local communities.

Decision Date: 29 May 2026
Mover: Craig Rowley

Seconded: Liz McMillan
Outcome: Approved

6.2 Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

Dan Gordon introduced the paper, with Jesse Burgess, Convener Climate Change Working Group, in attendance to support the discussion.

It was reported that implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan is progressing well, especially noting collaboration across Action 2: Emissions Reduction with the Energy Workstream and regional transport work, and emphasising the need for continuity over the multi-year programme.

Concerns were raised from members about the budget, and whether year 3 funding is required given the request to rollover Year 2 funding into Year 3, and the current underspend in the context of large-scale reform and need to manage rates increases responsibly. Members requested assurance that work and funding are prioritised appropriately, and a signal of what the work would look like if Year 3 funding was not granted.

Members noted the Strategic Review, which assesses whether current CCPP actions remain relevant, appropriately prioritised, and aligned with legislative changes, national direction, funding and staff resource availability, will be presented with recommendations in August and respond to the concerns raised with respect to budget requirements.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. approved the draft strategic framework for the Low Emissions Transition Plan (Action 2)
2. noted the completion of the Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Waitaha Canterbury's Ecosystems (sub-action 4.1), and that this will be published on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website
3. received the quarterly Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan implementation progress report and accompanying budget summary for quarter 3, year 2
4. approved the carry forward of \$519,724 from the year 2 CCPP budget (FY 25/26) to year 3 (FY 26/27)
5. agreed to maintain the planned council contributions for year 3 (FY 26/27), totalling \$540,143, subject to the outcome of the strategic review to be presented at the August 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting
6. noted the outcomes and recommendations of the strategic review will be reported to the August Mayoral Forum meeting.

Decision Date: 29 May 2026
Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconded: Nigel Bowen
Outcome: Approved

6.3 Regional Energy Workstream update

Hamish Riach presented the Energy Workstream paper, with Jesse Burgess, Chair Regional Energy Steering Group, in attendance to support the discussion.

The project is on pace and within funding to produce a draft action plan by the end of the financial year, which can be finalised with in-house resources. It was noted the level of stakeholder and mana whenua engagement with this project has been significant, with many stakeholders invested in how the work will be implemented.

The role of the energy workstream as a key informer of the spatial plan was underlined as well as the importance of critical cross sector conversations to join up work.

**Action**

Jesse Burgess to investigate whether there has been engagement with the Canterbury Engineering Lifelines Group.

Due Date: 7 Jul 2026

Owner: Maree McNeilly

**Decision**

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. endorsed the revised Regional Energy Strategic Framework and supporting report, noting that further refinements may arise from ongoing engagement with mana whenua
2. provided any feedback on the revised Regional Energy Strategic Framework and supporting report, by 12 June 2026
3. noted that a Scope of Work for the Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap has been developed, with the draft Action Plan / Roadmap scheduled for delivery by June 2026
4. noted that targeted engagement with stakeholders, mana whenua and community groups is ongoing
5. noted that the final Regional Energy Strategic Framework and Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap will be brought back to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for consideration and approval in the second half of 2026.

Decision Date: 29 May 2026

Mover: Nigel Bowen

Seconded: Liz McMillan

Outcome: Approved

6.4 Canterbury Regional Deal update

Hamish Riach introduced the paper with Jesse Burgess, Regional Deal Working Group, in attendance to support the discussion.

An analysis of the Western Bay of Plenty (Tauranga) and Auckland regional deals show that the deals build on existing collaboration and governance mechanisms and setting out expectations around working together over the next 10 years. Neither deal rules out government investment and support for complementary initiatives in other regions.

The Canterbury regional deal work is building an evidence base that will support future conversations around transport, energy, infrastructure, innovation, and housing, and is being undertaken with in-kind resources from the Economic Development Forum members.

**Decision**

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the update on progress for the development of a scope of works for a regional deal proposal
2. agreed to progress steps 1-5 of phase 1 of the scope of work with working group in-kind resources, as they are available
3. noted staff analysis of the Auckland and Western Bay of Plenty Deals and their implications for this work.

Decision Date: 29 May 2026

Mover: Dan Gordon

Seconded: Phil Mauger

Outcome: Approved

6.5 Chief Executives Forum report

This paper was taken as read.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the quarterly report from the Chief Executives Forum.

Decision Date: 29 May 2026

Mover: Nigel Bowen

Seconder: Marie Black

Outcome: Approved

7. For information

7.1 Activities and Engagements February - May 2026

This paper was taken as read.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the update on Canterbury Mayoral Forum activities, engagements and correspondence since the Forum's last meeting on 20 February 2026.

Decision Date: 29 May 2026

Mover: Craig Rowley

Seconder: Craig Mackle

Outcome: Approved

8. General business

8.1 General business

There were no items of general business.

8.2 Meeting review

The Mayoral Forum discussed the wording of the upcoming press release.

The deputy mayors thanked the forum for the invitation to attend. An invitation to attend future Mayoral Forum simplifying local government meetings was extended to Deputies



Action

Secretariat to contact Ministers Bishop /Watts offices to schedule meetings to present a Head Start proposal to Ministers.

Due Date: 30 Jun 2026

Owner: Maree McNeilly

8.3 Closing karakia

The meeting was closed with a karakia by the Chair.

9. Kai - lunch

9.1 Lunch

10. Close Meeting

10.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 28 Aug 2026, 8:30 am

Signature:_____

Date:_____

MINUTES (in Review)

CANTERBURY MAYORAL FORUM - REGIONAL SPATIAL PLAN



Name:	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Date:	Friday, 17 July 2026
Time:	9:30 am to 10:15 am (NZST)
Location:	Microsoft Teams, Online only
Board Members:	Nigel Bowen (Chair), Craig Rowley, Dan Gordon, Dr Deon Swiggs, Lydia Gliddon, Marie Black, Phil Mauger, Scott Aronsen
Attendees:	Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Hamish Dobbie, Hamish Riach, Jeff Millward, Nigel Trainor, Steve Gibling, Maree McNeilly, Amelia Wilkins, Ann Fitzgerald
Apologies:	Craig Mackle, Liz McMillan, Melanie Tavendale, Justin Tipa, Tania Wati, Alex Parmley, Angela Oosthuizen, Bede Carran, Ben Bateman, Stuart Duncan, Will Doughty
Guests/Notes:	Richard Wilson, Deputy Chair Ashburton District Council for Mayor Liz McMillan, John Bartels, Director GCP, John Higgins for Bede Carran and Matthew Pratt, Christchurch City Council

1. Open Meeting

1.1 Welcome, karakia and apologies

The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting and opened with a karakia.

Apologies received for the meeting were noted.

1.2 Confirmation of agenda

The agenda was confirmed as presented, and no items of general business were raised.

2. For discussion and decision

2.1 Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan

The Chair recapped Mayoral Forum discussions to date, noting the May 2026 Mayoral Forum agreed to a number of actions with respect to the Regional Spatial Plan:

- the project team, including the secretariat, would be hosted at Christchurch City Council
- the GCP secretariat is able to provide part time support for initial establishment of the RSP programme
- requested the Chief Executives Forum to determine the preferred funding model for the RSP.

Further decisions are required today to continue progressing this work, noting the 15-month timeframe following enactment of the Bills, and the assumption that the Regional Spatial Plan will be for all of the current Canterbury regional boundary.

Hamish Dobbie, Chair of CE Forum, was invited to introduce the paper. The following points were noted:

- The paper is based on what was in the Bills in December 2025, noting this will be amended as necessary following release of the 'updated' Bills on Monday 20 July 2026.
- The Chief Executives held a short meeting to discuss the funding question, then had a formal meeting to confirm the outcome of that discussion, along with a number of activities that need to progress to establish the Regional Spatial Plan programme for Canterbury. The meeting outcomes were
 - o noting proposed funding for the Regional Spatial Plan is in the vicinity of \$7-\$10M, based on a large one-off statutory planning programme, and that the overall RSP Programme resourcing and budgets will be refined as part of the establishment phase by the Programme secretariat working in conjunction with councils' officers
 - o agreement to recommend to the Mayoral Forum the proposed funding approach of requesting Canterbury Regional Council to debt fund the development, approval and transition to implementation of the Regional Spatial Plan
 - o along with funding the whole programme, the Chief Executives agreed in principle the need for dedicated programme secretariat resources now (26/27 & 27/28 financial years) to progress the establishment phase. This is estimated to be in the region of \$1,271M and \$1,371M across the two financial years with \$725,000 urgently requested in the 2026/2027 financial year to progress the establishment phase
 - o Chief Executives noted that most councils would have their share of this funding available in their current budgets – recognising that if a council cannot fund it now, the other councils will need to carry the cost until such time as they can. The Regional Spatial Plan is a legislative requirement, so every council will need to contribute.

John Bartels, GCP Secretariat Director, outlined the offer to support the RSP process, and the background to the decisions presented in the paper.

- GCP secretariat can provide a day/ week through June to end of August in an interim and part-time capacity to assist progressing the RSP establishment phase, noting that while hosted at Christchurch City Council this assistance is independent of the council
- the development of a Regional Spatial Plan for Waitaha-Canterbury will be a legislative requirement on all 11 Councils, it is not discretionary and involves ambitious timeframes for its completion in support of a rapid transition to the new, digitally enabled, planning system by 2029. It was noted that Waitaha-Canterbury is behind other regions on RSP preparations
- it will require all 11 Councils to each make decisions at a series of gateways in the lifespan of the Regional Spatial Plan Programme that cannot be delegated to the RSP Committee, to enable it to proceed with the work to reach the next. In the Planning Bill this starts with the Process Agreement
- additional resourcing and funding needs to be contributed urgently by councils for the recruitment of a full-time Programme Director and supporting roles to be initiated at pace
- Executive sponsor and governance through the CMF structure need to be agreed now to ensure things keep moving
- aligned to recommendation 7 a draft paper has been prepared for each council, seeking their:
 - o approval of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee
 - o approval of the draft Terms of Reference for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee (updated to reflect the Mayoral Forum's decision that the Independent Chair and government appointments would be none voting (unless directed differently by legislation)

- o nomination for council's representative on the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee
- o approval for its share of funding for the establishment phase
- o approval of its funding share split for the overall development and delivery of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan, noting that the resourcing and budgets will be refined through the establishment phase
- o delegating authority to the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee to appoint an independent chair.

Members views, questions and discussion followed:

- a question was raised about how the Independent Chair would be appointed – it is proposed that the position would be advertised and the Mayoral Forum/Regional Spatial Plan Committee would run the selection process
- noted at the May 2026 meeting it was requested that the Terms of Reference for the Regional Spatial Planning Committee allows for alternatives
- Members signalled that their respective council appointment will likely be the Mayor/Chair, but it was also important to allow for alternatives given the demands of the role. It was noted that the paper going to councils will need to be updated to seek the council's nomination for the regional spatial plan committee and an alternative member.

It was agreed that voting on the regional council debt funding the development of the RSP would be taken separately.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. approved the high-level programme approach to regional spatial planning for Waitaha Canterbury
2. agreed to prioritise the establishment phase of the Regional Spatial Plan Programme to ensure readiness for the enactment of new planning legislation
3. noted that overall Regional Spatial Plan Programme resourcing and budgets will be refined as part of its establishment phase by Programme secretariat working, in collaboration with Council officers and reported back to the Chief Executive Forum and Councils as required to inform annual budget and Long-Term Plan development
4. agreed, subject to formal approval through individual council processes, to the need for dedicated programme secretariat resources across the FY26-27 and FY27-28 of between \$1,271,000 and \$1,371,000 with \$725,500 being urgently requested in the FY26-27 from councils to progress the establishment phase of the Regional Spatial Plan Programme, under the leadership of the approved Regional Spatial Plan Programme Director role. This will need to be supplemented by in-kind contributions from local authorities, with associated costs apportioned using the existing regional forums funding allocation method
5. noted Christchurch City Council, as the nominated host Council, will initiate the recruitment processes for the Regional Spatial Plan Programme Director and programme secretariat positions once establishment funding has been approved by all Councils
6. approved the use of the Council draft decision report for each Council to:
 - o endorse the Regional Spatial Planning Committee Terms of Reference
 - o appoint their representative to the Committee

- o confirm their funding contribution toward establishment of the Regional Spatial Plan Programme, including the Programme Director role
- 7. agreed to the proposed governance for the Regional Spatial Planning Programme with the Chief Executives Forum functioning as the Steering Committee for the Regional Spatial Plan Programme to initially support:
 - o establishment of the Regional Spatial Plan Committee, including its membership, Terms of Reference, and securing approvals of the programme funding
 - o development and approval of the Process Agreement by all councils
- 8. noted that the next decision required from Councils will be to approve the Regional Spatial Plan Process Agreement, to be developed by Council staff and enabling the Regional Spatial Plan Committee to come into effect following enactment of the new Planning legislation
- 9. agreed to add the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan paper to council agendas as soon as practicable in July/August 2026.

Decision Date: 17 Jul 2026
Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconder: Marie Black
Outcome: Approved



Action

Secretariat to update the Terms of Reference to reflect the ability to have an alternate member and the recommendation in the draft council paper to provide for a nomination of an alternative member.

Due Date: 27 Jul 2026
Owner: Maree McNeilly

Further discussion followed:

- Deon Swiggs, Canterbury Regional Council Chair, advised he does not support the regional council debt funding regional spatial planning without the accompanying appropriate responsibilities, noting
 - o as Chair of CRC, he cannot support the regional council debt funding regional spatial planning without the appropriate responsibilities such as budget and staffing. This is not possible with the Secretariat and funds being held by Christchurch City Council
 - o the CRC has not voted on this yet as the request had not been formally made by the Mayoral Forum while the final development figures are worked through
 - o that Stefanie also raised this with the CE Forum, so this position does not come as a surprise.
- It was considered that debt funding the RSP work is the most appropriate approach, however if further discussions are needed it should not inhibit the immediate work progressing.
- Phil Mauger - respects the CRC position, and suggested the best option is for each council to fund their part through the full development of the RSP, recognising that further work is required to understand the detailed costs and in-kind resource that can be provided.
- There was discussion on whether the recommendation related to CRC debt funding the programme should change to a recommendation to debt fund but remove reference to CRC, or return the recommendation to the CE Forum for alternative options. A decision was made to continue the formal request to enable CRC councillors to debate this.



Decsion

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. agreed to request Canterbury Regional Council to utilise debt funding for the development, approval and transition to implementation of the Regional Spatial Plan.

Chair Swiggs and Mayor Rowley voted against the motion and Mayor Aronsen abstained.

Mayor Gordon noted his support is on the basis that the decision will allow CRC to discuss the matter, and report back to the CMF.

Decision Date: 17 Jul 2026
Mover: Nigel Bowen
Seconded: Dan Gordon
Outcome: Approved

Further discussion followed:

- clarification that the \$7-10m estimate was provided by the Planner Managers and would be an appropriate ballpark for a plan of this magnitude. Further work is needed to gauge available in-kind resource and how the costs could be split appropriately across councils. This work is for the Regional Spatial Plan only, and the Environment Plan (regional council) and Land Use Plans (territorial authorities) are to be funded by each council separately
- it was reiterated that it is a legal requirement for each region to develop a Regional Spatial Plan, the regional council to produce an Environment Plan and each territorial authority to create individual Land Use Plans. These come together to form the Combined Plan which each Canterbury council will need to approve. There will be mechanisms for it to be challenged as per the current planning process under the Resource Management Act.
- the Regional Forums Secretariat advised the council paper will be reviewed on Monday to ensure consistency with the Bills once announced. Members were advised that the Bills are intended to be passed prior to the closing of Parliament (~21 September 2026).

3. General business

3.1 General business

There were no items of general business.

3.2 Closing karakia

The Chair closed with meeting with a karakia.

4. Close Meeting

4.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 28 Aug 2026, 8:30 am

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Action List

Canterbury Mayoral Forum



As of: 21 Aug 2026

Action

On Hold

The Chief Executive sub-group to report back to the Chief Executive Forum in July 2025 and the August 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting on options with regard to a regional building consent authority.

Due Date: 30 Jun 2025
Owner: Maree McNeilly
Meeting: 30 May 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 4.6 Future regional and local government for Canterbury

Latest Update:

At the 22 August 2025 meeting it was agreed that with the recent Ministerial announcement of significant changes to the building consent system, this work will be paused until details of the proposed legislative changes are known.

Ann Fitzgerald | 27 Aug 2025

Action

On Hold

Genetic Engineering national conversation

Chair to circulate summary information from William Rolleston to CMF members.

Due Date: 30 Jun 2025
Owner: Nigel Bowen
Meeting: 30 May 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 6.1 General business

Latest Update:

20 February 2026 Noted that this is not a priority at this time

Ann Fitzgerald | 24 Feb 2026

A vision for the future of Canterbury Water

Canterbury water supply schemes are looking long term -
100 years in the making, and 100 years ahead

Introductions – Water Supply Scheme CEOs

11 major water supply schemes represented in this presentation.

We deeply understand the value of water and the CWMS, what it enables and the importance of protecting freshwater for the future.

We recognise the foresight of Cantabrians to create this legacy freshwater management infrastructure; our job is to ensure future generations benefit.

You'll know our impact in your district, today we will talk about the collective impact – managing at scale across Canterbury

Freshwater management by Schemes has delivered:

- Lower N losses across Canterbury
- Numerous environmental gains
- Supported our community's economic growth

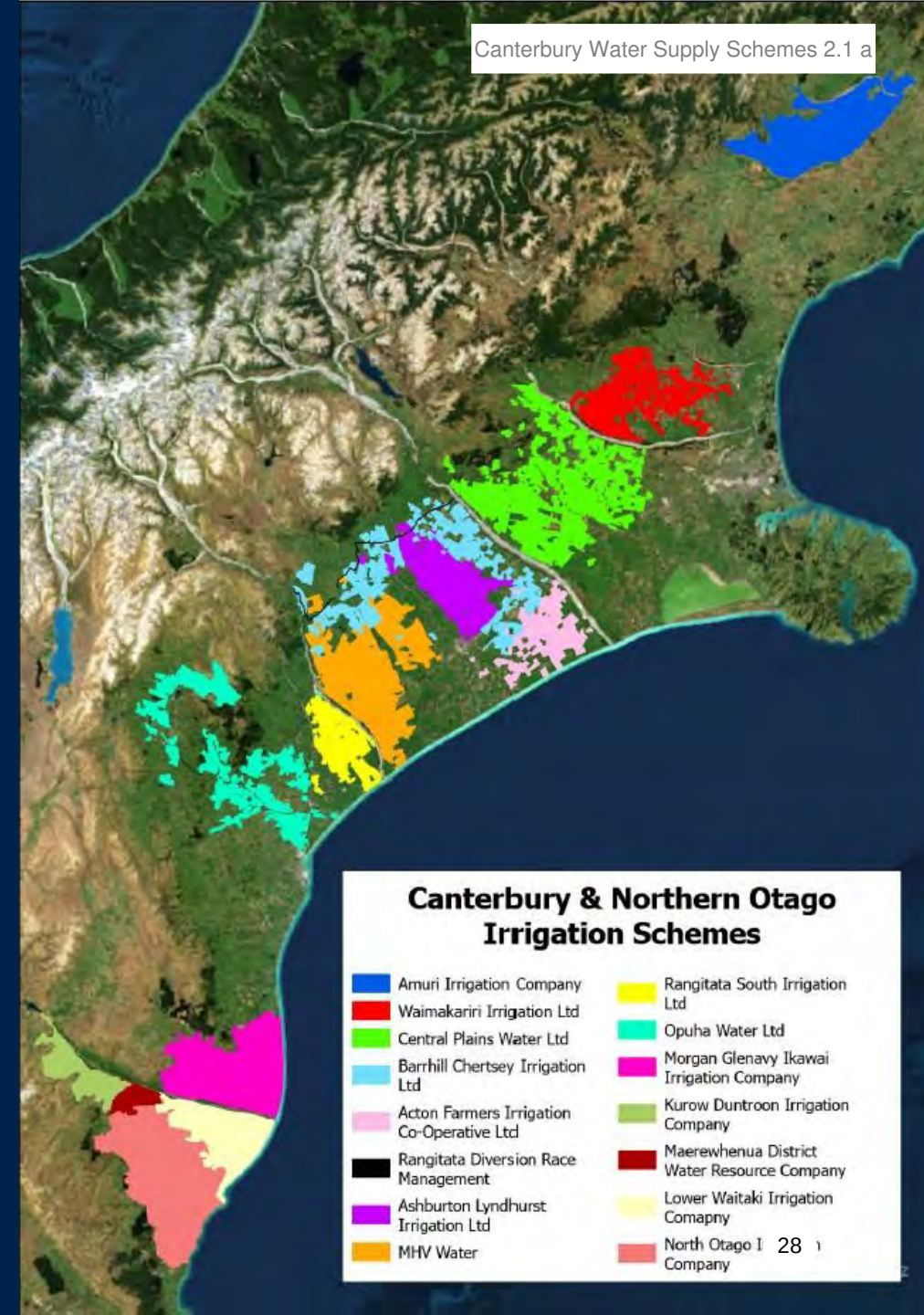
CWMS – communities are committed and are delivering

- The CWMS outcomes we are aiming for have not changed.
- We have taken ownership over the past 10 years
- We are focused on implementation
- We are committed to delivering and monitoring outcomes
- At the right time, schemes would like to work with Canterbury Mayors and iwi to undertake a refresh of the CWMS.

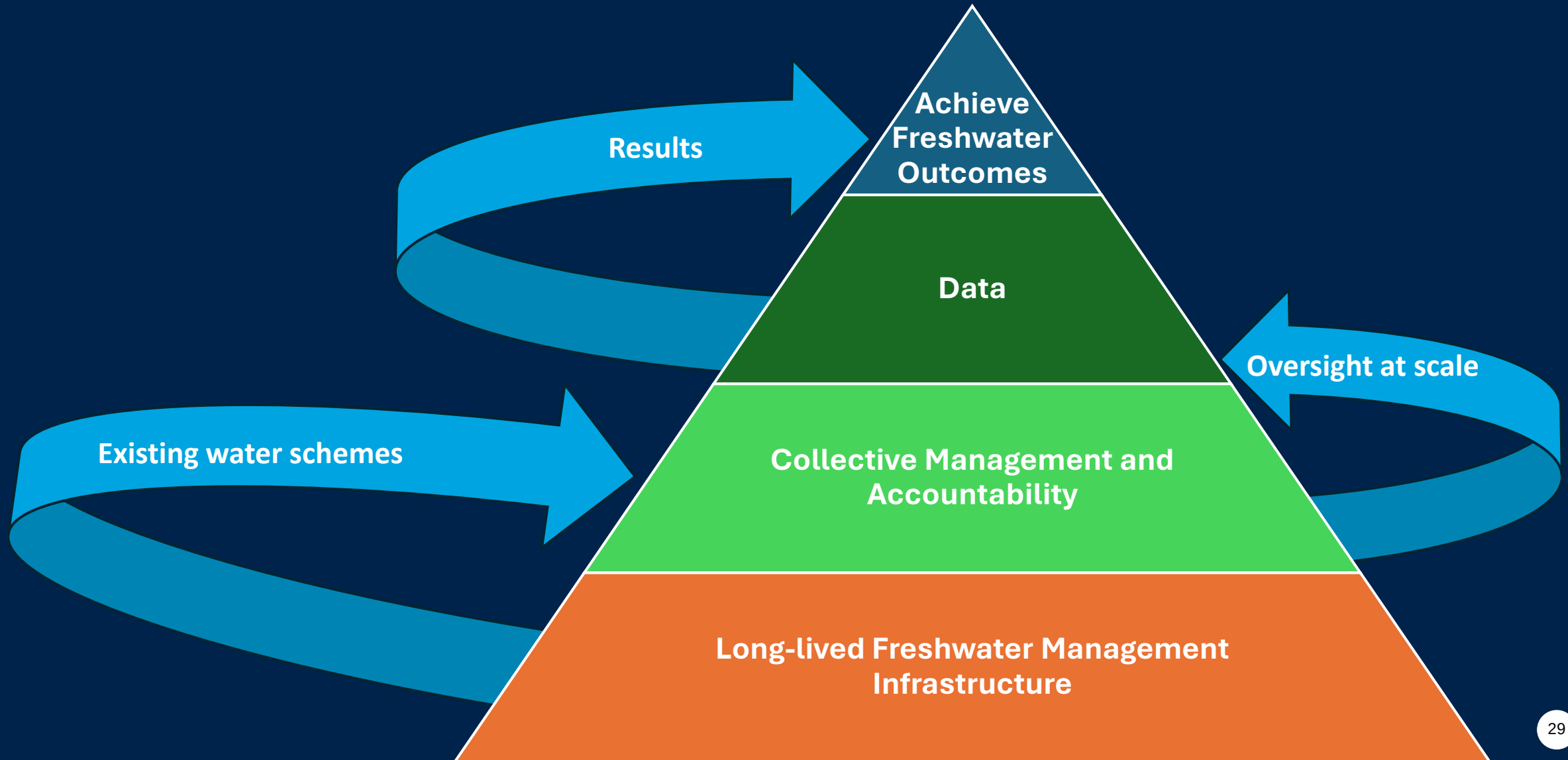
Local government reforms may change boundaries, but a Canterbury-wide approach to collectively managing freshwater is still required going forward.

Canterbury's unique asset – water management schemes

- **11** water management schemes.
- Collective management for 2000+ water users over 350,000ha within a 470,000ha command area.
- Manage ~75% of the consented river water resource for Canterbury.
- 50% reduction in nitrate leaching (combined impact)
- Economic impact of water supply schemes in Canterbury: **\$2 billion annual contribution to GDP.**
- Asset replacement value **\$2.4 billion.**

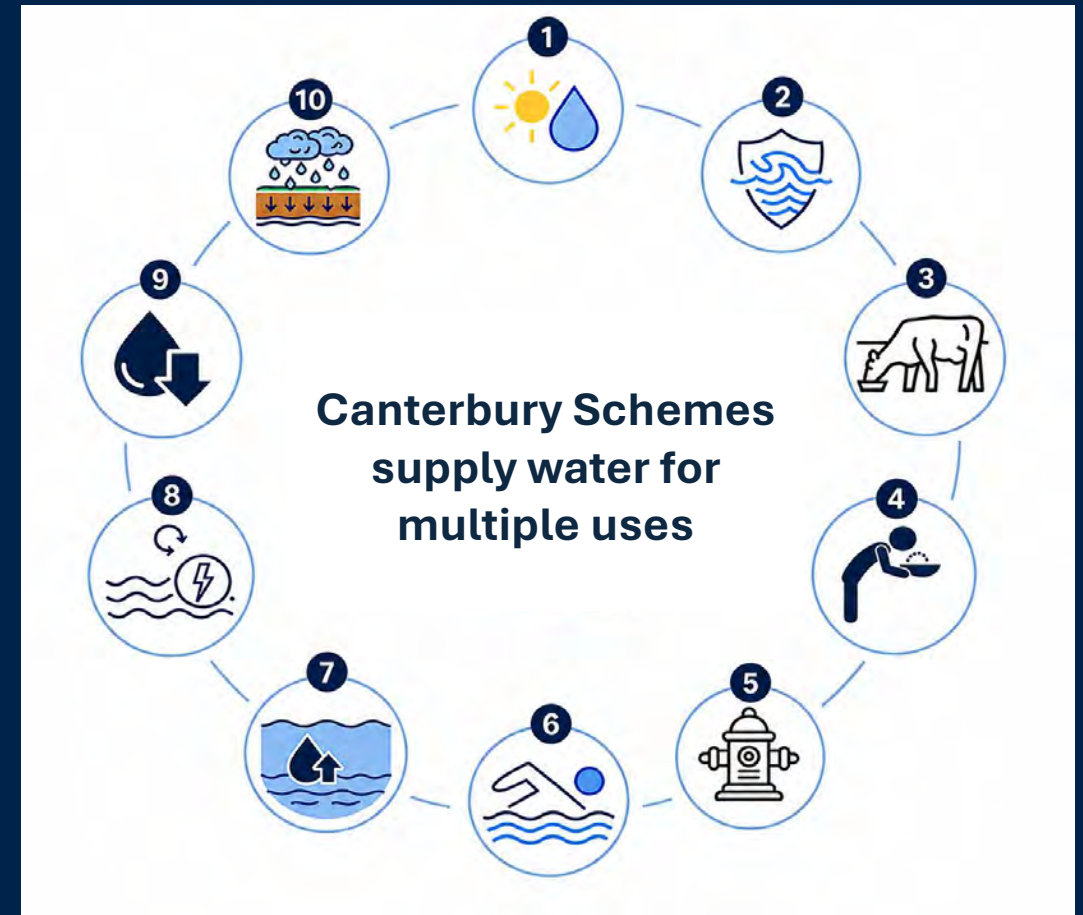


Schemes' collective impact



Schemes' provide water for multiple uses

1. Drought Resilience
2. Flood buffering
3. Stock water
4. Community drinking water
5. Firefighting
6. Recreational uses of water from storage lakes
7. Maintenance of environmental minimum river flows
8. Hydrogeneration
9. Reduced groundwater takes in sensitive zones
10. Replenishing aquifers – managed aquifer recharge



Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone - Central Plains Water Ltd (CPWL) impact achieved.
Environmental Limits	Environmental flows and catchment load limits	• CPWL scheme run of river reduces overallocation of groundwater in Selwyn Waihora Zone • CPWL shareholders – groundwater switch to surface water reducing groundwater takes by 75 million m³ since pre-scheme. • Increased median flows recorded in Coes Ford (2026)
Ecosystem Health/ Biodiversity	Freshwater species and their habitat	• Ecologist surveys to identify and protect birds, mudfish habitat surveys. • Lizard protection areas and lizard surveys • Fish migration and habitat assessment at the Rakaia River intake.
	Drylands	Nil
	Wetlands	• Sheffield intake wetland enhancement work. • Working with T Taumutu Runanga on their wetland enhancement.
	Hāpua, Lagoons and Estuaries	Nil

Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example continued..

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone (CPWL)
Ecosystem Heath/ Biodiversity	Lowland Streams and lakes.	- Thirteen years of data from 20 dedicated CPW groundwater bores and 29 surface water sites – water quality and levels. - Installation of instream surface water sensors to monitor water quality.
	High country and foothill streams and lakes.	Upper plains/foothills streams and groundwater monitored by CPWL, 13 years of data.
	Understanding emerging contaminant risks	Project to investigate nitrate hotspots from farming activities and onsite wastewater systems 2026
	Catchment nutrient loads set for SWZ and CPWL	- From 2015-25 CPWL reduced N loss by 32% - SWZ leading Canterbury in Nitrate reductions from farming. Source: Environment Canterbury FEP data.

Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example continued..

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone (CPWL)
Natural Character of braided rivers	Braided river character	• Annual native fish surveys by NIWA at CPWL Waimakariri Intake. • Bird Surveys monthly on both Rakaia and Waimakariri Rivers.
	Ecosystems, habitats & species/riparian wetlands, springs and lagoons.	• Multiple habitat protection and enhancement projects. • Landpro overland flow paths and depression aping to identify the priority areas for intervention of surface water. • Eco-index satellite imagery: identification and verification of native forest in command area (natives 10 years or older). • Eco-index wetland mapping: satellite imagery to detect wetlands with ground truthing verification undertaken by CPWL, enabling system verification of wetlands.
Kaitiakitanga	Marae water supply	• Nil.

Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example

continued..

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone (CPWL)
Kaitiakitanga	Working together in partnership.	- Environmental Management Fund (EMF) and community planted over 80,000 stems across SWZ funded by CPWL shareholders over 10 years. - Twenty dedicated fire hydrants on CPWL infrastructure across the command area. - CPWL funded ESAI to undertake feasibility of connecting Jollies Brook to the Rakaia River Lagoon with the aim of improving fish passage. - Te Waihora Environmental Management Fund (- Te Waihora Lake Openings 12.5% contribution to the annual cost of lake openings.
	Wahi taonga and mahinga ki	Mahinga kai included in FEP audit programme.
Drinking Water	Source water quality targets	nil
	Catchment nutrient loads (drinking water).	- Thirteen years of water quality monitoring with the last five years showing 60% bores reducing nitrate levels. - Reduced nitrates below the root zone by 32% (pre CPWL to 2025) reflects positive impact of GMP on water quality.

Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example continued..

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone (CPWL)
Recreation and amenity opportunities	Water-based recreational opportunities	In planning – annual event on headrace canal
	Recreational water flows	Environment Canterbury and CPWL Near River Recharge (NRR) infrastructure built to boost downstream flow when required.
	Freshwater angling	Nil
	Recreational water quality	Improved flows at Coes Ford.

Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example

continued..

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone (CPWL)
Water use Efficiency	Best practice and benchmarking	• All PCWL shareholders have FEP's • CPWL irrigates 45,000ha and manages 71,000ha of land via FEP's – includes an additional 26,000ha farmland under management that does not receive CPWL water. • 98% A and B grade audits achieved.
		Supporting applications to improve on-farm management both in kind and cash. • Aqualinc N Wise Irrigation Management: CPWL provides power and water to the project, testing the effects of different irrigation management rules on pasture production and nitrate leaching. • Develop management practices to reduce soil compaction under pastoral irrigation. • Optical N-sensing for VRA-N for Dairy Pastures. The aim of this project was to determine the viability of using optical sensor technology to apply variable rates of nitrogen fertiliser (RA-N) for pastoral farming on dairy pastures. • Farming with Native biodiversity SFFF Application.

Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example

continued..

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone (CPWL)
Irrigated Land Area	Land area and reliability	Irrigation to 45,000ha – converted 21436ha from groundwater use to surface water use.
	Infrastructure	From 2014 – 2018 CPWL constructed a modern, efficient piped surface water supply scheme including: • Infrastructure to include back up drinking water supply for Sheffield and Springfield townships. • Stock water supply in Sheffield. • 20 firefighting turnouts/hydrants. • NRR infrastructure incorporated into irrigation GRP pipe at Selwyn River
Energy Security and Efficiency	Energy Security and Efficiency	• Gravity based surface water supply scheme reduced groundwater pumping and 11.5MW demand on electricity network. • 319 solar powered turnouts across the scheme area.

Our tracking against CWMS targets – an example

continued..

CWMS Targets	Detailed target areas	Selwyn Waihora Zone (CPWL)
Indicators of Regional and National Economies	Value-add from CPWL water	2025 BERL Report \$390 million direct expenditure by CPWL shareholders and \$399 million contribution to GDP. 2,203 FTE jobs Food production increased 2.9 million loaves of bread, 1.22million kg's beef; and 441.6 million litres of milk.
	Externalities and opportunity costs	Labyrinth weir investment at CPWL intake to reduce climate related flood outages. Decrease from 32 events in 8 years to four events in eight years (loss of productivity is estimated at \$600,000 to \$800,000 per day).

Get water right ... get the future right

- ✓ A Canterbury wide approach to collectively managing freshwater is key for the future.
- ✓ The collaborative nature of the CWMS –communities, industry, Ngāi Tahu, Mayors and Councils is powerful. We all share ownership of freshwater management outcomes.
- ✓ Canterbury Schemes are committed to working with Canterbury Mayors and Iwi to refresh the CWMS.
- ✓ The refresh of the CWMS can unlock the full potential of Canterbury's fresh water supply and management infrastructure for the next 100 years.
- ✓ We need to plan to ensure these water management assets are optimised for Canterbury's future.

Thank you

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Dr Deon Swiggs, Chair Canterbury Regional Council

Canterbury Water Management Strategy

Purpose

1. This paper responds to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's request for advice regarding the future of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy considering Government reforms and to present recommendations on behalf of the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **notes the Government's reform programme will have significant implications for the Canterbury Water Management Strategy and freshwater management in Canterbury, and that clarity on final reform decisions is needed before assessing the future of the Strategy**
2. **notes that mana whenua and the community have played a critical part in delivering to Canterbury Water Management Strategy outcomes, and any decision on the future of the Strategy should be informed by mana whenua and community views**
3. **agrees that advice on timing and process for a review of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy come to the Mayoral Forum in mid-2027, pending further clarity on local government and resource management reform**
4. **agrees that establishment of local leadership groups only be progressed in areas where a request to do so has been received by local mayors and/or councils**
5. **agrees that each local mayor and/or council notify the Chief Executive of the Canterbury Regional Council in writing of their intention to progress the establishment of local leadership groups in their area by 25 September 2026**

Key points

2. The Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) was adopted by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) in 2009 and has supported nearly two decades of collaborative freshwater management across Canterbury. It has informed statutory

planning processes, including the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan, brought together local and regional leadership, established goals and targets that have guided council and community action, and guided funding of local solutions and community-led initiatives. A brief overview of the CWMS's core elements is provided in Attachment 1.

3. In May 2026, the Mayoral Forum requested advice on the future of the CWMS in light of the Simplifying Local Government programme and resource management reforms, including the potential implications for local communities.
4. Given significant uncertainty remains regarding final reform decisions, undertaking a review now on the future of the CWMS is premature. While the reforms will significantly impact regional freshwater planning, governance and delivery, understanding the nature of these implications requires more clarity from the reform programme.
5. Despite this uncertainty, the core principles of the CWMS remain relevant. Collaboration, locally informed solutions and broad community participation will continue to be important in delivering both statutory and non-statutory freshwater outcomes. As the strategy has moved from planning into implementation, communities have also taken greater responsibility for shaping and delivering local outcomes. This role will remain important regardless of the final form of the reforms.
6. The local leadership group model was endorsed as a way of supporting community-led delivery of CWMS outcomes and could continue to serve this purpose during the transition to a new system. Progress in establishing the groups has, however, varied across Canterbury. There has not been consistent commitment from all parties, and Head Start considerations will likely further test commitment to these groups.
7. On behalf of the Chief Executives Forum, it is, therefore, recommended that the Mayoral Forum:
 - agree to commission a review of the CWMS in mid-2027, once the Resource Management Act replacement legislation has been enacted and the direction of local government reform is clearer
 - agree that establishment of local leadership groups only be progressed in areas where a request to do so has been received by local mayors and/or councils.

Initial outlook for the CWMS in context of Government reforms

Potential implications of current Government reforms

8. Amidst the establishment of leadership groups, the Government has made a suite of announcements since the end of 2025 that will reshape the operating environment for local government and freshwater management across New Zealand, with significant implications for the CWMS. These include the Simplifying Local Government programme and the Resource Management reform, comprising the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill (Phase 3) alongside the Phase 2 programme that involved changes to the RMA and existing RMA national direction, including freshwater management.

9. The reforms are intended to simplify decision-making, reduce regulatory complexity, improve consistency across regions, strengthen infrastructure and environmental management, and provide greater certainty for communities, councils, landowners and investors. This may be reflected in fewer and more standardised planning instruments, greater use of national direction and standards, more consistent regulatory processes, and clearer expectations for environmental outcomes and development.
10. While some aspects of the reforms are becoming clearer, many details concerning the form and function of how freshwater will be managed remain to be determined. A robust assessment of the implications of current Government reforms can, therefore, not be provided until further details become available, including final decisions on Simplifying Local Government Head Start proposals in May 2027.
11. Attachment 2 provides a preliminary overview of key reform elements relevant to the CWMS. Several general implications can be drawn from this overview (see Table 1).

Potential implication	Description
Greater standardisation and reduced regional variation	A key objective of the reforms is to reduce national variation in planning rules and processes through stronger national policy direction, national standards, standardised zones and fewer planning instruments. This may reduce regional variation in environmental management and land-use planning. This is one of the most significant practical shifts from the current RMA framework.
Changing iwi and community engagement	The reforms likely affect collaborative resource management arrangements involving iwi, mana whenua, councils and communities. As greater emphasis is placed on nationally directed policy, standards and environmental limits, the way iwi and hapū engagement and collaborative processes influence freshwater planning and decision-making may change.
Reduced reliance on resource consents	One of the Government's stated objectives is fewer consents, fewer activity categories and more permitted activities where environmental limits and standards have already been established. This could significantly change how freshwater issues are managed at the operational level, including the number and type of activities managed under resource consents.
Stronger spatial planning and infrastructure alignment	The proposed combined regional plans include long-term spatial planning intended to better coordinate land use, infrastructure, housing growth, natural hazards and environmental management. This likely has significant implications for freshwater planning and CWMS implementation.
Freshwater decisions likely become more nationally directed	Although details remain uncertain, overall direction of the reforms suggests that nationally determined standards and policy direction will have a greater influence on freshwater management than under the current system.
Reduced discretion at plan and consent level	A recurring theme is narrowing the scope of issues that can be considered at planning and consenting stages. For the CWMS, this may affect how local values and trade-offs can be reflected in future decision-making.
Potential implications for collaborative freshwater governance	The CWMS evolved within a system where considerable discretion existed at regional and local levels. If more decision-making is shifted to nationally prescribed frameworks, there may be implications for the role and influence of regional collaborative processes.

Table 1 Potential implications of Government reforms relevant for the CWMS

12. Based on these implications, the following broad impacts on the CWMS are likely:
 - a shift towards centralised decision-making, with more decisions made at a national level and fewer decisions made locally by communities or elected members. This

does not align with the CWMS's subsidiarity approach where decisions are taken as closely as possible to the communities who are affected.

- a potential weakening of the protections, rights and interests afforded to iwi and hapū, and reduced opportunities for mana whenua input into strategic decisions on resource management. This contrasts with the CWMS approach where an explicit strategic driver was to protect the rights and interests of iwi and hapū under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Mana whenua have been a key partner of the CWMS, with representation on past water zone committees and local leadership group model.
- the inclusion of a mandatory environmental limits framework represents a substantive improvement on the RMA and aligns well with the CWMS where setting and managing environmental limits has been a goal since its inception. However, it remains to be seen whether the reforms will allow for ecosystem limits to be set at a level that delivers on the environmental outcomes envisioned under the CWMS.

Significant uncertainty exists

13. Taken together, current reforms will have significant implications for collaborative freshwater management arrangements like the CWMS. However, the relationship between these arrangements and the emerging statutory framework remains uncertain, and further detail is required to assess whether and how the CWMS's approach and operating model may fit within the new system.
14. As a collaborative strategy, the CWMS has relied on the collective commitment of councils, Ngāi Tahu, communities and other freshwater stakeholders. Its future will similarly depend on partners' ongoing commitment to the collaborative vision. Further engagement will be required to clarify future roles, responsibilities and expectations.
15. The implications of other Government reforms, including rates capping and Local Water Done Well, also need to be considered. In particular, newly established water service delivery organisations may influence how freshwater is managed and coordinated across Canterbury, and these may, in turn, be affected by current Government reforms.
16. The fiscal implications of the reforms for CWMS operation and delivery remain uncertain. A clearer understanding of future local government arrangements beyond 2028 will be needed to assess long-term operating and funding options.

Advice to the Mayoral Forum

Advice #1: There is now significant community ownership of the CWMS and an ongoing desire to deliver towards CWMS outcomes collaboratively. While a review of the CWMS is required, it needs to be informed by the views of mana whenua and key stakeholders and by final reform decisions.

17. Over the past two decades, Canterbury's communities have demonstrated a sustained commitment to collaborative freshwater management and collective stewardship, delivered through the CWMS. This is reflected in strong community ownership of

freshwater outcomes, continued demand for CWMS Action Plan Funding, and ongoing involvement of key parties such as irrigation schemes, NGOs and catchment groups.

18. This commitment was reaffirmed through the CWMS Zone Committee Review 2024 and subsequent Mayoral Forum Working Group comprising Mayors, Papatipu Rūnanga Chairs and the Canterbury Regional Council Chair. The Working Group concluded that connection between councils, mana whenua and communities remains critical to effective freshwater management, and that CWMS fundamentals and guiding plans remain sound. The Mayoral Forum endorsed the local leadership group model in May 2025 to continue supporting freshwater outcomes and community-led action.
19. The strategy's focus is now firmly on monitoring outcomes and strengthening effective delivery against the agreed goals to 2040, while addressing known challenges and remaining gaps. This work can continue until reform decisions are made.
20. Work has been underway to consolidate the 2030 CWMS targets to align them with the reported 2025 targets and provide clearer measures and a more streamlined framework to prioritise action and demonstrate improvement. This work has now been largely completed with guidance from the Canterbury Operations Forum.
21. A review of the CWMS will be better informed if it recognises the ongoing implementation work towards 2030 targets, final reform decisions, and the views of mana whenua and key stakeholders.

Advice #2: Local leadership groups provide an opportunity to continue supporting local action towards CWMS outcomes. However, progress and commitment have been patchy, and this work should only progress where there is a clear desire from parties for these groups.

22. Through its catchment-based governance arrangements and collaborative approach, the CWMS has enabled communities, mana whenua, stakeholders and elected members to shape local priorities, trade-offs and long-term outcomes. While Government reforms will affect these collaborative arrangements and opportunities for local direction-setting, effective engagement will continue to be relevant for both future planning processes and the delivery of shared freshwater outcomes.
23. Local leadership groups can provide a mechanism for achieving this and progressing the 2030 targets and freshwater outcomes with partners and the community until at least the end of the 2028 local government term. There is value in progressing these groups where there is a commitment to do so from core parties.
24. Progress in establishing these groups has, however, been variable, with a clear commitment from parties in some areas, and limited progress in others. Additionally, increased capacity constraints for Mayors, Chairs and councils due to Simplifying Local Government Reform pose challenges for establishing leadership groups in the near term.

25. There is a strong case for pausing or ceasing establishment in areas where there is not a clear commitment for these groups. This will allow resourcing to be re-prioritised. It does, however, carry several risks:
- a perception of councils walking away from the CWMS and the collective efforts to drive freshwater improvements in Canterbury
 - a weakening of the strategic relationships that have guided CWMS outcomes
 - a loss of local connection to drive action towards the 2030 CWMS targets.
26. Given broader community ownership of the CWMS, community-driven delivery of CWMS outcomes will likely continue and can be supported through other means, e.g. CWMS Action Plan Funding in 2026/27.

Recommendations

27. At its August 2026 meeting, the Chief Executives Forum considered the Mayoral Forum's request regarding the future of the CWMS in light of Government reforms and endorsed the following recommendations:
- that the Mayoral Forum agree to commission a comprehensive review of the CWMS in mid-2027, once the implications of local government and resource management reforms are clearer
 - that the Mayoral Forum agree that establishment of local leadership groups only be progressed in areas where a request to do so has been received by local mayors and/or councils.
28. Note, a review of the CWMS needs to be informed by Government reform decisions. Based on indicative timelines this could commence in mid-2027. However, these timelines are subject to change, so it is proposed that advice on timing and process for a review of the CWMS be provided to the Mayoral Forum in mid-2027.
29. It is recommended that each local mayor and/or council notify the Chief Executive of the Canterbury Regional Council in writing of their intention to progress the establishment of local leadership groups in their area by 25 September 2026. This will ensure establishment of these groups can continue in a timely manner where this is desired. In areas where establishment of leadership groups is not requested, alternative mechanisms will be explored to strengthen delivery of actions at place and ongoing CWMS implementation with core partners.

Next steps

30. Canterbury Regional Council staff will:
- liaise with each council to determine if the establishment of leadership groups is to be continued in their area and, if a request to do so is received, establishment will be progressed with representatives from all core parties

- pending Mayoral Forum endorsement, commence planning a co-designing process for a review of the CWMS in mid-2027
- provide a progress update at the next Mayoral Forum meeting, including the 2030 CWMS Targets consolidation and CWMS Action Plan Funding for the 2026/27 year.

Attachments

- **Attachment 1:** Overview Canterbury Water Management Strategy
- **Attachment 2:** Preliminary overview of Government reforms relevant to the Canterbury Water Management Strategy

Attachment 1: Overview Canterbury Water Management Strategy

1. By the early 2000s, Canterbury faced significant freshwater challenges, including over-allocation, declining ecosystem health, drought impacts, and growing conflict between water users, exacerbated by the absence of an operative freshwater planning framework. Processes under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) were often adversarial and ineffective in managing cumulative effects and competing demands.
2. Following the Canterbury Strategic Water Study (1999–2006), the CWMS was adopted by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum in 2009 to provide a collaborative and strategic alternative, grounded in long-term sustainability and integrated management. Key partners under the CWMS are territorial authorities, Canterbury Regional Council, Ngāi Tahu, the Canterbury community, and organisations with interests in water.

Vision and core principles

3. The Strategy has been underpinned by a shared long-term vision “to gain the greatest social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits from water resources within an environmentally sustainable framework, both now and for future generations.” To achieve this vision, a commitment to collaboration and collaborative decision-making has been at its core. The strategy lays out holistic targets across ten broad areas (see Fig. 1)

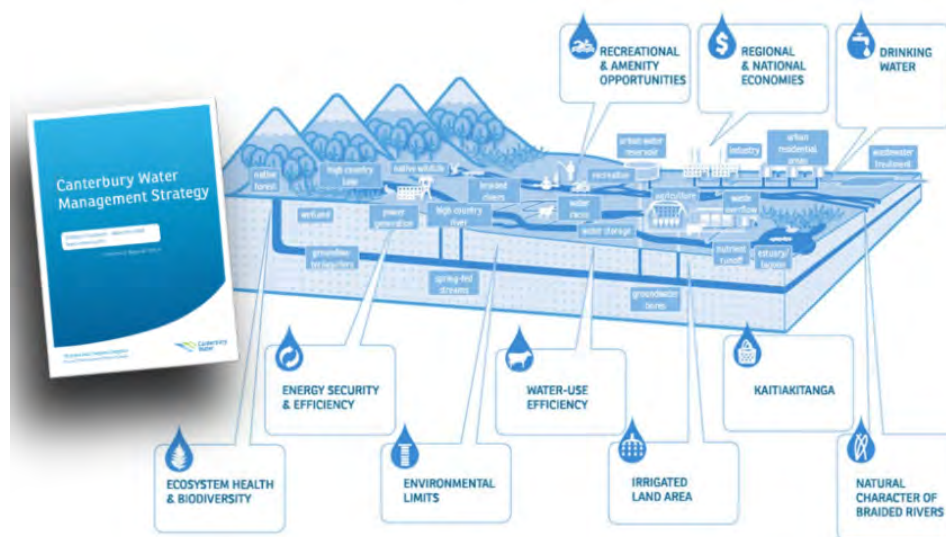


Figure 1 The ten target areas of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy

4. Following this vision, the strategy defines success along a quadruple bottom line of sustainability outcomes. These include: restored and protected freshwater ecosystems; high-quality drinking water supplies; enhanced cultural values and mahinga kai; improved recreational opportunities; increased regional prosperity through efficient water use; as well as collaborative governance and reduced conflict.
5. The CWMS's strategic vision has been backed by primary and supporting principles:
 - Primary principles include: sustainable management of water resources, recognition of water as a public resource, integration of land and water management, and recognition of Ngāi Tahu values and kaitiakitanga

- Supporting principles include: managing cumulative effects, equal consideration of surface and groundwater, precautionary approach under uncertainty, efficient use of water, and integration of science and adaptive management
6. Crucial implementation drivers have included a 'gift and gain' approach to reach consensus, subsidiarity (resolution of issues at the lowest practicable level), as well as the establishment of dedicated collaborative governance and implementation structures.

Outcomes and delivery framework

7. The ten target areas are defined by staged goals from 2010–2040 to be achieved in parallel through regulatory and non-regulatory actions. To carry forward the collaborative approach and support implementation, ten Water Zone Management Committees and a Regional Water Management Committee were established in 2010–2011 under the auspices of the Mayoral Forum. These committees developed Zone Implementation Programmes (ZIPs) and a Regional Implementation Programme, respectively.
8. The intention of establishing committees at a sub-regional level was to engage communities in local water management, including the development of solutions to local water issues with broad stakeholder support. The rationale behind the zone delineation was to enable integrated management of Canterbury's surface and groundwater resources, facilitate local participation, create manageable community planning areas, and balance hydrological and administrative boundaries.
9. Zone committees were an integral part of collaborative freshwater management, including through involvement in plan changes, the development of ZIPs, and by enabling local community-led initiatives. From approximately 2015 onwards they also developed ZIP Addenda, detailed catchment work programmes, and catchment-scale implementation priorities. However, the context changed in recent years due to a shift to implementing recommended actions, more directive national legislation, and increased activity of catchment groups. The Mayoral Forum thus endorsed a replacement model of local leadership groups in May 2025 following the [CWMS Zone Committee 2024](#)¹.
10. Implementation has also been supported through a range of other mechanisms, including dedicated delivery staff and work programmes within the regional council and territorial authorities. CWMS Action Plan Funding ranging from \$500,000 to \$750,000 p.a. has supported local community-led projects at place, with 37 projects full or partly funded across Canterbury in 2026 alone. Additionally, organisations with interests in freshwater management (e.g. irrigation schemes and catchment groups) have driven on-the-ground actions to achieve CWMS targets.
11. Progress towards CWMS outcomes has been regularly reported to Canterbury's communities since 2013, with the last reports in [June 2021](#)² and [July 2025](#)³ showing that some goals have been met while others were only partially or not met. This indicates significant progress but also that maintaining momentum requires ongoing collective efforts, sustained commitment and share accountability, and adequate resourcing.

¹ <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/document/download?uri=5562967>

² <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/water/measuring-cwms-progress-2021>

³ <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/water/measuring-cwms-progress>

Attachment 2: Preliminary overview of Government reforms relevant to the Canterbury Water Management Strategy

1. Central Government made a suite of announcements since the end of 2025 that will reshape the operating environment for local government and freshwater management across Aotearoa New Zealand, with significant implications for the CWMS. These reforms represent a substantial restructuring of the nation's planning, environmental management and local government frameworks.
2. Many details concerning how freshwater will be managed under the reformed system remain to be determined. These include:
 - Simplifying Local Government reform: In principle decisions on Head Start proposals will be made in September 2026, with final policy decisions to follow in May 2027 and the Backstop reforms commencing following the 2028 local elections.
 - Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill: The RMA replacement legislation has yet to be enacted (with passage intended by mid-2026), with a first tranche of national policy directions and environmental standards expected from late 2026 and a transition period from 2027–2029.
 - Amended national direction instruments under the RMA: To date, two tranches of new and amended instruments have been implemented, with further changes expected to be considered by Cabinet before the end of July 2026.
3. At this stage, it appears that while many natural resource management and planning decisions under the RMA were made through regional and local planning and consenting processes, the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act will place greater emphasis on nationally set directions and instruments. Key implications of this shift include greater use of national rules and regulations, simplified national direction, and more activities permitted through national rules.
4. The rationale for moving to two Acts is to separate development and environmental protection, which the RMA managed in a single decision-making framework. The Planning Bill is intended to provide greater certainty around land use and development. The Natural Environment Bill aims to protect ecosystems, freshwater, biodiversity, air quality and coastal environments through mandatory environmental limits.
5. While environmental outcomes under the RMA are influenced through both planning instruments and project-level consenting, the Natural Environment Bill proposes to front-load decision-making, with more decisions made through national instruments and combined plans and fewer at the consenting stage. The Natural Environment Bill proposes ecosystem health limits to be established in the natural environment plan (a chapter of the Combined Plan) in advance of individual consent decisions, with the intent to reduce uncertainty and litigation. However, the extent to which environmental limits balance environmental protection with signalled economic growth objectives will depend on their final design and implementation. Further, the effectiveness of this will depend on adequate monitoring, enforcement and willingness to maintain robust limits over time, which has been challenging and uneven across the country under the RMA.

6. The Government is considering shifting compliance and enforcement functions to a national regulator. This change is intended to improve consistency in regulatory oversight and enforcement across regions, reduce variations in how compliance and enforcement functions are applied, and enable more effective responses to non-compliance.
7. The Natural Environment Act is expected to contain provisions relating to Māori interests, Treaty considerations and consultation requirements in natural resource management. The extent to which these provisions differ from those under the RMA, and the implications for decision-making, will depend on the final legislation and supporting national direction. However, based on the draft legislation, the provisions are likely to be narrower, directive and prescriptive, with reduced consideration of the rights of Māori.
8. Public participation under the Natural Environment Act is expected to be focused more on policy and plan-making processes, where environmental limits and outcomes are established, rather than on individual consent decisions (i.e. 'front-loaded' approach). This may provide earlier opportunities for public input, while potentially reducing opportunities to challenge individual developments once those limits are in place.
9. The Government confirmed in May 2026 that many current regional functions will not be centralised and will shift to unitary authorities, excluding functions that are already under consideration as part of Government's Resource Management work programme. These include flood protection, emergency management, biosecurity, environmental regulation, and public transport.
10. The RMA replacement legislation will also shift away from each local authority preparing an individual RMA plan and towards 17 combined regional plans, integrating spatial planning, natural environment planning and land-use planning components. The precise allocation of planning responsibilities between regional and district-level components of the combined regional plans will be confirmed through implementation of the new system. This means that Canterbury is expected to be covered by a single combined regional plan, although the final structure will depend on implementation of the new system. Based on the Bills as introduced to Parliament, regions will need to prepare their draft regional spatial plan within 15 months of enactment.
11. Government has signalled a preference for larger unitary authority arrangements and has introduced a voluntary Head Start pathway for councils wishing to reorganise before 2028. A compulsory reform process for other regions is expected after the 2028 local elections, although the final structure of local government across all regions has not yet been determined. Current regional councillors will stay on through to the end of the 2028 term to support regional councils' roles in implementing the new planning system. In-principle decisions on Head Start proposals are expected in September 2026, with confirmation and final policy decisions to follow in May 2027.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Hamish Dobbe, Chair Chief Executives Forum
John Bartels, Interim Programme Director Regional Spatial Plan

Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on:
 - progress on the standing up of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee through individual Council governance
 - progress made in the establishment phase of the Regional Spatial Planning Programme
 - proposed next steps in relation to the above.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. receives the update on the establishment phase of the Regional Spatial Planning Programme
2. notes that at its full Council meeting of 12 August, Christchurch City Council resolved to:

“5. Approves the terms of reference (Attachment A to this report) for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, conditional on the inclusion of two additional voting members, appointed at a future date by Christchurch City Council....and

7. Notes that approval for the alteration of the terms of reference required by Recommendation 5 above will be sought from other Canterbury councils”.
3. agrees that the representation on the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee as proposed for individual council endorsement will remain, i.e. one representative for each 11 local authorities, three mana whenua representatives, with provision for alternates, non-voting independent chair, non-voting central government representatives as appointed by the Minister - **(CMF Recommendation 29 May 2026)**. This recognises the committee membership model has been negotiated and well considered over the past several months through the Mayoral Forum, notes that a number of local authorities have, or are soon to, consider endorsement of the Committee Terms of Reference, and reflects the requirements of s74B of the soon to be enacted Planning Bill 2025 in

relation to consensus decision making and dispute resolution for local authorities and Spatial Plan Committee for regional spatial planning.

4. **requests the Chair of the Mayoral Forum formally communicate to Christchurch City Council, in response to its decision made at its 12 August 2026 full council meeting, seeking an additional two members on the Regional Spatial Planning Committee, what is agreed by the Mayoral Forum in relation to recommendation 3 of this report and its underlying rationale and reasoning and seek Christchurch City Council to reconsider its decision on this specific matter as soon as practicable.**
5. **notes that the next decision milestone for the Mayoral Forum and individual local authorities, under the soon to be enacted Planning Bill 2025, is the approval of the Process Agreement for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan, with the Spatial Plan Committee Terms of Reference as an attachment.**
6. **notes that the approval of the Process Agreement by individual local authorities is part of a series of decision-making gateways in the establishment, development, hearings and approvals and implementation of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan.**

Key points

2. This report provides the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) with an update on progress in establishing the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Planning (RSP) Programme, including the standing up of the Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) Committee, progress across the establishment phase, and the key decisions required to maintain momentum towards commencement of regional spatial planning.
3. The RSP Programme has progressed significantly through the establishment of workstreams and working groups, engagement with Chief Executives, advancement of Programme Director recruitment, and development of arrangements for the Regional Spatial Planning Secretariat.
4. The Waitaha Canterbury RSP Committee membership model has been developed through a series of discussions and workshops involving the Mayoral Forum throughout 2026 and has been conceived in good faith and with the best interests of the Waitaha Canterbury region in mind.
5. The proposed membership model reflects a deliberate balance between regional representation, effective governance, mana whenua participation, manageable committee size, and the consensus-based decision-making framework anticipated by the Planning Bill 2025.
6. Consistent with the Planning Bill 2025, the RSP Committee's role is to collaboratively prepare the Regional Spatial Plan through consensus-based processes. Importantly, local authorities retain a central and ongoing decision-making role throughout the

lifecycle of regional spatial planning, including key approvals required during establishment, development, hearings, final approval and implementation of the Regional Spatial Plan.

7. Individual councils are currently progressing decisions on the RSP Committee Terms of Reference, appointments and funding contributions as part of the establishment phase approved by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.
8. On 12 August 2026, Christchurch City Council resolved to support the proposed RSP Committee Terms of Reference subject to the inclusion of two additional voting members and requested that this amendment be considered by other Canterbury councils.
9. While the Christchurch City Council resolution relates to committee representation, the more significant issue for the Mayoral Forum is the potential impact on regional cohesion, confidence in previously agreed arrangements, consensus-based decision-making, and timely delivery of the RSP Programme.
10. The resolution has the potential to create reputational, relational, governance and programme delivery risks, particularly where governance matters that are intended to be addressed collectively through the Regional Spatial Planning framework are considered separately from that broader context.
11. Four broad response options are available to the Mayoral Forum. These range from reaffirming the current membership model through to supporting Christchurch City Council's proposal, undertaking a broader review of the membership arrangements, or considering an alternative response.
12. Following assessment of the options, reaffirming the current membership model is considered to provide the strongest strategic and governance position as it maintains regional alignment, honours previous collective decisions, supports the consensus-based intent of the Planning Bill 2025, and enables establishment activities to proceed without unnecessary delay.
13. The next major decision gateway for all local authorities is not committee membership, but approval of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Process Agreement later in 2026 (expected to be formally considered by Canterbury councils in December 2026).
14. The Process Agreement is the foundational document that will establish how the RSP Committee works together, including governance arrangements, decision-making processes, Māori participation, dispute resolution mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, information requirements and key milestones.
15. Preparation of the Process Agreement over the coming months provides the appropriate opportunity for local authorities, mana whenua and the RSP Committee to holistically consider governance arrangements, including whether there should be a division of decision-making responsibilities for particular issues, topics or geographic areas as contemplated by the Planning Bill 2025.

16. The recommendations in this report are therefore directed at maintaining regional momentum, supporting consensus-based decision-making, preserving strong regional relationships, and ensuring all local authorities remain well positioned to exercise their ongoing statutory decision-making responsibilities through approval of the Process Agreement and subsequent stages of Regional Spatial Plan development.

Progress Update - Regional Spatial Planning Programme

17. To support increased awareness of the current status of preparations for regional spatial planning within the local authorities, letters were sent electronically on 11 August, signed by Hamish Dobbie as the Executive Sponsor of the RSP Programme, to each Chief Executive with a presentation attached to support awareness raising and consistent messaging across staff on how the work is being approached to meet the Regional Spatial Plan requirements under the Planning Bill 2025 when enacted.
18. Establishment phase working groups have been established with membership drawn from Chief Executive nominations guided by criteria and principles for members to support consistent, effective and constructive ways of working. This formed part of the information communicated to CEs as part of the letter to them.

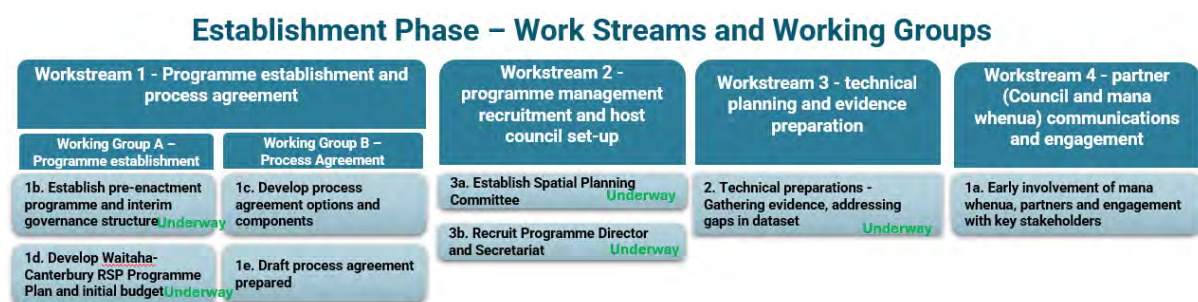


Figure 1: Establishment Phase Workstream and working group structure and tasks

19. Programme Director recruitment has been progressed through the CE Forum alongside host council arrangements for the RSP Secretariat by Christchurch City Council officers.
20. The key deliverable from the establishment phase is the preparation and approval by all 11 local councils of the Regional Spatial Plan Process Agreement.
21. A Process Agreement is the foundational document that sets out how the RSP Committee will work together to prepare a Regional Spatial Plan, including governance arrangements, decision-making processes, stakeholder engagement, Māori participation, information requirements, and key milestones.
22. To be effective it needs to be underpinned by strong partnership, mutual trust, shared objectives, transparency, clear roles and responsibilities, effective dispute resolution processes, and a commitment to collaborative and evidence-based decision-making.

23. A well-designed Process Agreement is critical because it establishes the operating framework for the Spatial Planning Committee, builds confidence and alignment among participating organisations, and provides the structure needed to efficiently develop a credible, integrated, and implementable draft Regional Spatial Plan.

Regional Spatial Plan Committee structure and membership model

24. The Mayoral Forum has discussed the potential make-up of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee since the Planning Bill was first introduced, initially at the January 2026 CMF workshops.
25. Voting rights for committee membership was discussed at these early workshops. While some initially promoted votes based on population, others suggested that land area should also be taken into consideration. Noting the expectation that most decisions would be by consensus, and that final decisions would be made by councils, it was collectively agreed by Mayoral Forum members that each council would have one representative on the RSP Committee.
26. The options for the governance of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee and draft terms of reference were brought to the May Mayoral Forum meeting, where it was agreed that the Committee would be made up of one representative from each council, three mana whenua representatives, and a non-voting independent chair and government appointment.

Progress update on individual council decisions for establishment phase: RSP Committee ToRs, members and funding contributions

27. Consistent with the decision made at the May Mayoral Forum meeting, individual local authority decision making processes on the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Committee have been scheduled across August and into September.
28. The Mayoral Forum Secretariat is monitoring the scheduling of the reports across all local authorities. A verbal update on the status of decision making across the region can be provided as required to the Mayoral Forum when it meets.
29. Whilst the focus of individual local authority decision making and approval is currently on the Regional Spatial Plan Committee Terms of Reference, the next is anticipated to be seeking councils' approval of the Process Agreement for Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan in December 2026. This is consistent with all local authorities having an ongoing role in decision making as the spatial plan is developed and progresses towards implementation.
30. The interim RSP Secretariat has analysed the Environment Select Committee report version of the Planning Bill 2025 and documented the decision-making gateways for the key parties in the spatial plan in a decision-making flowchart, that is included as **Attachment 1** to this report.

Christchurch City Council decision and Mayoral Forum considerations

31. At its full Council meeting of 12 August, on the topic of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, Christchurch City Council resolved to:

“Council Resolved CNCL/2026/00126

That the Council:

- 1. Receives the information in the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee Report.*
- 2. Notes that the decision in this report is assessed as low significance based on the Christchurch City Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.*
- 3. Approves the establishment of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee as a joint committee under the Local Government Act.*
- 4. Approves the joint committee will not be discharged on the coming into office of the members of the local authority elected or appointed at, or following the triennial general election.*
- 5. Approves the terms of reference (Attachment A to this report) for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, conditional on the inclusion of two additional voting members, appointed at a future date by Christchurch City Council.*
- 6. Notes that the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee might reasonably seek amendments to the Terms of Reference as the establishment phase progresses.*
- 7. Appoints the Mayor as Christchurch City Council's representative on the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee.*
- 8. Appoints Councillor Harrison-Hunt as Christchurch City Council's alternative representative on the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee.*
- 9. Approves its share of funding \$148,727.50 for the \$725,000 requested for 2026/2027 financial year, in accordance with the Canterbury Mayoral Forum allocation, for the establishment phase of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan.*
- 10. Approves its funding share split of 20.50% for the overall development and delivery of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan.*
- 11. Notes the funding arrangements for the development of the Regional Spatial Plan, including additional costs beyond the establishment phase in 2026-2027 financial year, will be considered and agreed as part of the establishment phase.*
- 12. Notes that resourcing and budgets will be refined through the establishment phase of the Programme with future reports for updated funding requirements provided to Council for approval as required.*

13. Delegates authority to the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee to appoint an independent chair at its first meeting.

14. Notes the next decision for the Council, with respect to the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan, is the approval of the Process Agreement to enable preparation of the regional spatial plan to formally commence.

15. Notes the Christchurch City Council has confirmed through the Mayoral Forum to host the Independent Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Programme Director, the associated programme management office and the secretariat.

16. Notes the significant cost that this Central Government reform imposes on council and its ratepayers.

17. Notes that approval for the alteration of the terms of reference required by Recommendation 5 above will be sought from other Canterbury councils".

32. This report and recommendations have been brought to the Mayoral Forum, to enable a timely response to Christchurch City Council's resolutions clauses 5 and 17 above.

Implications of Christchurch City Council resolution

33. As a result of Christchurch City Council's resolution to seek changes to the membership model, the following key risks have been identified:

- a. **Reputational** – Christchurch City Council's resolution may be perceived by mana whenua, local authorities, central government agencies, Ministers, MPs, and other stakeholders as departing from the collaborative regional approach previously agreed through the Mayoral Forum. This risks undermining confidence in the region's ability to work collectively on preparation of the Regional Spatial Plan.
- b. **Relational** – The resolution has the potential to impact trust, confidence and working relationships between Mayors and elected members across Waitaha Canterbury. It may also create uncertainty regarding the durability of previously agreed regional positions.
- c. **Legal and Governance** – The request for two additional Christchurch City Council members does not materially alter the consensus-based decision-making framework underpinning the proposed Committee Terms of Reference and reflected in section 74B of the Environment Select Committee version of the Planning Bill 2025. The issue risks potential escalation into dispute resolution, or worst-case referral to the Minister, resulting in decision-making being removed from the region.

Additional membership may also increase governance complexity, administrative costs, and make consensus more difficult to achieve.

- d. **Process Agreement and Statutory Delivery** – The resolution risks pre-empting consideration of governance and decision-making arrangements that are more appropriately addressed through development of the Process Agreement, including applying the division of responsibilities provisions under Schedule 2, clause 4(1)(b). Delays in resolving committee membership arrangements also increase the risk of delayed approval of the Terms of Reference, establishment of the Committee, and completion of the Regional Spatial Plan within legislative timeframes.

34. The principal risk arising from the Christchurch City Council resolution is not the composition of the Committee itself, but the potential impact on regional cohesion, trust between councils, timely establishment of governance arrangements, and the region's ability to meet Planning Bill timeframes through a consensus-based process.

35. These risks are best mitigated by maintaining the existing Mayoral Forum-endorsed membership model and addressing future governance and decision-making arrangements, including exploring the division of decision-making responsibilities for identified matters, through the Process Agreement.

Options for how Mayoral Forum responds

36. To enable progress to be made in establishing the Committee and the drafting of a Process Agreement for the approval of all 11 local authorities in Waitaha Canterbury, the Mayoral Forum have four broad options to consider in responding to clauses 5 and 17 of the Christchurch City Council resolution:

- a. **Option 1. Mayoral Forum reaffirms its support for the current RSP Committee membership model:** Retain membership model as originally agreed through the Mayoral Forum (**Recommended**);
- b. **Option 2. Agree to increase CCC membership:** Agree to CCC's decision seeking two additional members on RSP Committee and ToRs amended accordingly;
- c. **Option 3. Reassess the Membership Model:** Re-negotiate Regional Spatial Planning Committee membership model based on the CCC decision e.g., all parties have 2x additional representative members;
- d. **Option 4. Other response:** Consideration of other options or a combination of the options outlined above.

37. A high-level assessment of the respective pros and cons for determining the merits of each of the identified options for how the Mayoral Forum could respond to the Christchurch City Council resolution are summarised in the table below.

Option	Key Advantages	Key Disadvantages / Risks
Option 1: Reaffirm support for the current RSP Committee membership model (Recommended)	- reinforces the collective regional position previously agreed by the Mayoral Forum and demonstrates stability of regional leadership - aligns with the consensus-based intent of the Planning Bill and reduces the likelihood of disputes regarding representation and voting influence - preserves focus on regional outcomes rather than governance representation debates - retains a more manageable committee structure, supporting efficient discussions, relationship-building and consensus-based decision-making - avoids increasing programme governance complexity, administrative costs and secretariat resourcing requirements.	- may be viewed by Christchurch City Council as insufficient recognition of its size, strategic role and financial contribution. - may create short-term political tension between Christchurch City Council and other Mayoral Forum members. - requires proactive relationship management to strengthen trust and alignment through the next phase of the programme.
Option 2: Agree to Christchurch City Council's request for two additional members	- directly responds to Christchurch City Council's resolution and may help alleviate immediate political concerns - acknowledges Christchurch's significant population, economic influence and programme contribution - may strengthen Christchurch City Council's confidence in the governance arrangements.	- risks being perceived as giving one council preferential status within a regional partnership framework - may undermine confidence in the Mayoral Forum's previously agreed position and create expectations for further representation changes - risks eroding trust amongst other councils and creating a precedent that larger councils can secure governance changes after regional decisions have been made - could shift focus from regional consensus to representation and voting influence.
Option 3: Reassess the membership model for all parties	- creates an opportunity for a broader discussion about representation, equity and regional governance arrangements - may address concerns through a comprehensive review rather	- reopens a matter that has already been debated and agreed, creating uncertainty around future regional agreements - presents the greatest risk of delay to developing a Regional

	than a council-specific response.	Spatial Plan and reduced confidence in the region's ability to work collectively • risks diverting leadership attention from plan development to governance discussions.
Option 4: Alternative or hybrid response	• could allow enhanced participation, influence or leadership opportunities outside formal committee membership arrangements.	• risks introducing governance complexity and ambiguity • could prolong negotiations and delay progress if alternative arrangements are not clearly defined and supported.

Table 1: High level assessment of options for the Mayoral Forum in responding to Christchurch City Council resolution.

38. From a regional leadership perspective, **Option 1** represents the lowest overall risk and strongest strategic position. It demonstrates that the Mayoral Forum remains committed to collective regional decision-making, respects agreements already reached, and avoids creating a precedent that membership arrangements can be revisited following individual council decisions.
39. It is recognised that engagement by the Mayoral Forum with Christchurch City Council on this issue needs to be undertaken considerably, constructively and honestly as a partner to regional spatial planning.
40. Option 1 of reaffirming the existing Terms of Reference is recommended as it best protects regional cohesion, fosters confidence amongst all local authorities and mana whenua, and keeps attention focused on preparing the Regional Spatial Plan rather than renegotiating governance arrangements. In doing so it preserves the ability for governance and division of decision-making responsibilities based on specific topics or geographical areas to be considered holistically through the design of the forthcoming Process Agreement.
41. Based on the issues focused on in this Mayoral Forum report there are a number of learnings that should be incorporated into future work of the Regional Spatial Planning Programme:
- a. clear communications to officers to support consistent messaging to elected members
 - b. council officers to complete briefings or workshops in advance of decision-making reports, where timeframes allow
 - c. the importance of progressing foundational work through the Partner Communications and Engagement working group and doing so with executive level officers and subject matter experts

- d. progressing the development of the draft Process Agreement consistent with requirements of the Planning Bill 2025, in particular Schedule 2. This includes consideration given to the division of responsibilities on decision making for particular issues or geographical areas through the spatial planning committee by completing the work necessary to inform its preparation through the establishment phase of the Regional Spatial Planning Programme.

Communication

42. The three key messages to be communicated in relation to this report are:

- **Regional spatial planning is a collaborative process that depends on strong regional partnerships, trust and consensus-based decision-making.** The Planning Bill 2025 requires local authorities and mana whenua to work together in preparing the Regional Spatial Plan, with dispute resolution provisions available where consensus cannot be achieved. Maintaining alignment across the region is critical to ensuring decisions remain locally led and that progress towards a Regional Spatial Plan is not unnecessarily delayed.
- **The Mayoral Forum reaffirms its support for proposed Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee membership model as originally developed and endorsed through a series of regional discussions and workshops.** Reaffirming the agreed model is important to maintain regional cohesion, provide certainty for participating councils and mana whenua, and avoid unnecessary delays to establishment activities. Timely confirmation of governance arrangements will enable the Committee to be stood up, the Process Agreement to be developed, and the region to remain on track to meet upcoming statutory milestones for regional spatial planning.
- **Committee membership is only one of a number of key decision points within the Regional Spatial Planning process, and local authorities will continue to play a central decision-making role throughout the lifecycle of the Regional Spatial Plan.** The next major decision gateway is approval of the Process Agreement, which will establish how the Committee works together and may include provisions for allocating responsibilities for particular matters or geographic areas. This provides the appropriate opportunity for governance and decision-making arrangements to be considered holistically while ensuring all councils retain an ongoing role in shaping, approving and implementing the Regional Spatial Plan. There is specific provision in Schedule 2, clause 4 (1) (b) of the Planning Bill for the local authorities to agree to a Process Agreement that includes the division of responsibilities for making decisions on certain matters or parts of the draft RSP or if all decisions will be made unanimously.

Next steps

43. All staff nominations are completed by Chief Executives to work on the five working groups for the establishment phase of the Regional Spatial Planning Programme so

these can be stood-up by the interim RSP Secretariat with support from the Mayoral Forum Secretariat – **Prior to 28 August 2026.**

44. Chair of Mayoral Forum to send a letter to the Mayor and Councillors of CCC, that:

- a. communicates the Mayoral Forum decision in response to the request for two additional Committee members, advise of the rationale in the Mayoral Forum deciding its position.
- b. seeks the urgent consideration at the next council meeting.
- c. acknowledges that Christchurch City Council and all other local authorities will have a continued role in making decisions on regional spatial planning as demonstrated by the decision-making flowchart (**Attachment 1**).
- d. notes that the approval of the Process Agreement for the regional spatial plan is the next decision required by council in late 2026 and this provides the ability for governance and division of decision-making responsibilities based on specific topics or geographical areas to be considered holistically.

This will be prepared with the support of the Mayoral Forum Secretariat and input from the interim RSP Programme Director – **By 4 September 2026.**

45. All local authorities decide on the respective Regional Spatial Plan Committee representative and alternate – **Early September 2026.**

46. Draft Process Agreement prepared and circulated through the Mayoral Forum to local authorities for feedback and finalisation – **September - November 2026.**

47. Regional Spatial Plan Programme Director proposed to be appointed – **October 2026.**

48. Mayoral Forum meeting to consider draft Process Agreement for taking to each individual partners governance processes for approval – **20 November 2026.**

49. Individual Partners to complete briefing or workshops with their elected members as warranted – **November/ December 2026.**

50. Approval of draft Process Agreement for Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan progressed by Chief Executives for individual local authorities' approval, to initiate the development of the Regional Spatial Plan – **December 2026.**

Attachments

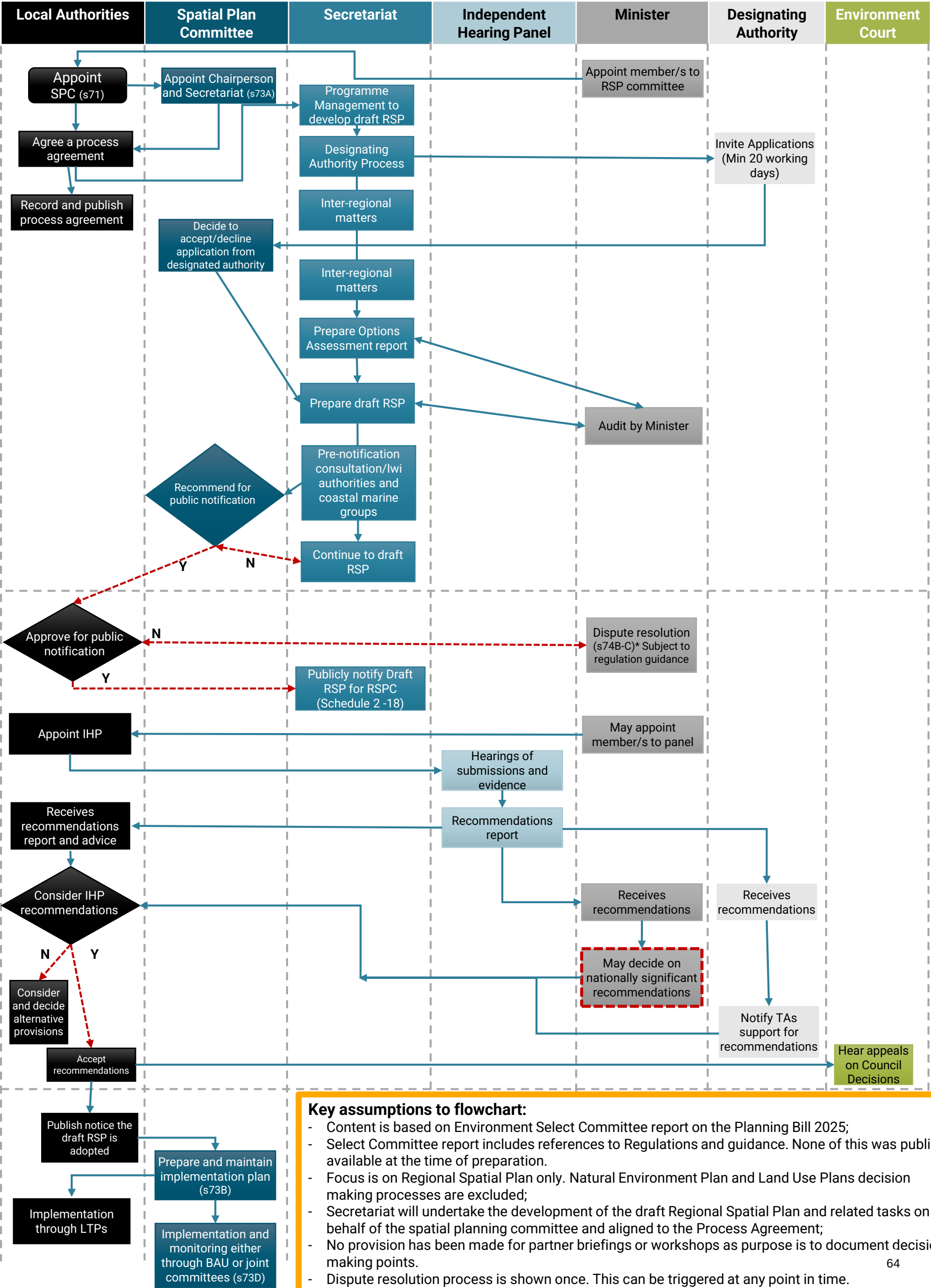
- **Attachment 1** – Regional Spatial Planning – Decision making flowchart

Regional Spatial Plan Decision Making Process Flowchart

Establishment and RSP Development

Formal engagement and approval

Implementation, monitoring and review



Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Hamish Riach, Chair Economic Development Forum
Jesse Burgess, Regional Deal working group

Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on work to date on progressing through the scope for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus (Regional Deal) and seek the Mayoral Forum's input into next steps.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **provides feedback on the Phase 1 workstream 1 report for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus**
2. **provides advice on next steps proposed for delivery of the next stages of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus workstream.**

Background

2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) confirmed its intention to continue with the development of a Canterbury Regional Deal proposal at the November 2025 meeting. A Governance Group meeting was held on 30 January 2026 to discuss whether the development of a regional deal should be prioritised at this time and if so, what direction should be provided in the framing of a scope of works.
3. The Regional Deal work has been packaged as an investment prospectus¹ to support conversation across the political and private sector spectrum, and in a format that can be actioned in a modular way, meaning sections can be progressed in time as priorities and funding shift. The intention is to position Canterbury as best we can to both a national and international audience.
4. In-kind resource from Canterbury Regional Council was committed until 30 June 2026 to develop the scope of works, alongside the regional deal working group. Following approval of the scope of work, further in-kind resources have been utilised to progress Phase 1.

¹ Noting that investment may relate to funding, finance, regulation, legislation, and or policy

5. The work is progressing on the basis of an investment prospectus for Waitaha Canterbury, acknowledging that things may change following the 2028 local government election.

Scope of works

Phase 1: Steps 1-5

6. The draft scope of work, built around the core features of project purpose, key deliverables, funding and resourcing, governance and reporting arrangements, communications and engagement, provision for endorsement / agreement from member councils and ways to progress workstreams independently so progress is still achieved while balancing competing demands, was agreed at the Mayoral Forum in May 2026.
7. Work has since progressed on steps 1-5 of Phase 1 of the scope of work, using in-kind resources as available. This phase focuses on confirming the scope and story of a Regional Deal, the evidence base available to support it, and the options for further work to fill any gaps.
8. The workstream 1 report (attachment 1) is the first output of this phase. It uses the *World-stage Ready* and *Canterbury Ambition* documents as the basis of a skeleton narrative for a Regional Deal proposal, with the five pillars of *World-stage Ready* as its core investment themes. It has been reviewed by the Regional Deal working group and the Chief Executives Forum and reflects all feedback received at the time of writing.
9. It does not identify specific investments or interventions that should be included under each of the five pillars. It is planned that specific cornerstone projects for each pillar will be identified as part of the development of the market-ready core proposal in Phase 2.
10. Currently most of the in-kind work is being undertaken by Canterbury Regional Council staff. A high-level summary of the specific skills required to continue with completing the Phase 1 deliverables of the scope of work has been considered by the Regional Deal working group, with the intention of sourcing specialist in-kind resources to complete Phase 1. ChristchurchNZ, as a member of the working group, has indicated they have potential to support the communications and engagement and economic analysis workstream depending on scope and availability.
11. The assumptions that have gone into the work so far are:
 - overall deliverables at the end of Phase 1 remain high-level and strategic, providing the scaffolding to develop the actual market-ready core proposal in Phase 2
 - this phase of work will deliver a strategic case for change through the investment narrative and themes, a single agreed starting point in terms of our priorities and evidence, an indication of whether extra work is needed to give us the evidence to show our audiences there is an economic case for investment across the five pillars, and an estimate of what such work might cost.

12. Step 6 of Phase 1 is the targeted engagement with partners and other key regional stakeholders beyond those included in the working group, on the first 5 steps. To date this engagement has only occurred at the Economic Development Forum, Chief Executives Forum, and Regional Deal working group, and today with the Mayoral Forum.
13. The Regional Deal working group is continuing to work on when and how targeted engagement should proceed with other stakeholders.

Phase 2

14. The Regional Deal working group is considering the resources and/or funding required to proceed with Phase 2, which will cover the development of the market-ready core Regional Deal proposal based on the narrative and priorities developed in Phase 1.
15. Their initial thoughts are that an economic assessment of the potential gaps in information from Phase 1, and how these could be covered through Phase 2, is desirable. At the time of writing the specific resource/funding has not been identified, but the working group is considering what this may look like.
16. Along with identifying gaps, the working group is starting to progress thinking on initiating Phase 2 of the scope of work. If required a request to the CE Forum to support specific resources/funding will be progressed.

Canterbury Ambition

17. Business Canterbury have started running a series of workshops to design “a private sector-led, public sector-enabled ambition for the Canterbury region”, building on their earlier Canterbury Ambition work.
18. The workshops focus on themes identified during the development of the Canterbury Ambition: workforce, immigration and investment; transport and infrastructure; regulation and innovation; energy; housing and planning. They aim to find two or three clear, actionable asks under each theme to be included in a Briefing to Incoming Ministers in December 2026.
19. As World-stage Ready and Canterbury Ambition developed in tandem and the Mayoral Forum and Business Canterbury collaborated closely on each other’s work, we would expect that the short-term asks developed through this new phase of their work will likely align with the longer-term strategic direction of a Canterbury investment prospectus proposal.
20. While a full investment prospectus proposal for the region will not be progressed prior to the election, the Business Canterbury workshops will both test and influence external expectations around the priorities for Canterbury’s long-term development. They may also help to inform other work by the Mayoral Forum.

Next steps

21. Subject to the direction of the Mayoral Forum, the Regional Deal working group will continue work on the remaining workstreams of Phase 1 and provide a final Phase 1 report to the November Mayoral Forum.
22. Along with the Phase 1 report an update will be prepared on resources and/or funding required to proceed with Phase 2 to develop a market-ready core proposal based on the narrative and priorities developed in Phase 1.

Attachment

- **Attachment 1:** Phase 1 Workstream 1 report

Attachment 1: Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus – Phase 1 report

Purpose:

1. Provide a review and summary of the priorities identified in the Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready and Canterbury Ambition documents.

Executive summary

2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum and Business Canterbury have developed two strategic documents, *Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready* and *Canterbury Ambition*.¹ These provide overlapping parts of a single story about Canterbury and the unique opportunity it presents to central government and others interested in investing in the region.
3. Because these foundational documents are at the centre of regional partners' thinking about Canterbury's future development, and are the most well-developed pieces of the wide body of work that has been done across the region, it is appropriate to use them as the basis of a Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus (Regional Deal).
4. The shared story across these documents identifies the factors behind Canterbury's ongoing economic success, sets a guiding ambition for the region, highlights a unique investment opportunity based on the areas with the greatest potential to ensure Canterbury's long-term success, and supports this by explaining how further action in those areas will translate into supercharged growth, productivity, and wellbeing.
5. These documents also provide the building blocks of a plan to achieve the ambition, which would be marketed through a Regional Deal. These include pillars that help direct investment where it will add the most value, a set of priorities to explain what investment should look like in the short term, progress indicators that will help the region to gather evidence the desired changes are happening, and performance measures that will show whether the plan is on track.
6. This report steps through the foundational documents and arranges these elements into an outline of the core narrative that would sit at the heart of the Regional Deal. This story is designed to highlight the opportunities for investment in the areas that are the highest priority for Canterbury, and to market those opportunities to the full range of public and private sector partners who can provide the investments of capital, regulatory change, and other interventions needed for Canterbury to realise its ambition.
7. While this report does identify five investment priorities, it does not specify the types of assets or projects that should be included. That level of detail will be addressed by Phase 2 of the work programme, which will build and deliver the core proposal for a

¹ For brevity, the two documents are also referred to throughout this report as *World-stage Ready* or *WSR*, *CA*, or *the foundational documents*. This reflects their role as the foundation of a Regional Deal.

Canterbury Regional Deal. However, it does identify some early considerations which will be addressed through the rest of Phase 1.

The foundational documents

8. *Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready* is a strategic document that was developed by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum, alongside Business Canterbury and the private sector, for the purpose of forming a shared ambition for the region and to put it into a position to work towards negotiating a Regional Deal or take advantage of similar opportunities. It builds on the Mayoral Forum's work to progress shared prosperity for all the region's communities.
9. It aims to provide a single shared story for Canterbury and explain how its attributes contribute to a truly unique value proposition that is compelling to both national and international investors. That story outlines the region's environmental, economic, human and institutional asset base, explains how these factors have resulted in economic success and distinct competitive advantages grounded in Canterbury's unique lifestyle, and highlights an opportunity to unlock the region's full growth and productivity potential.
10. To ensure the investment needed to unlock that economic uplift goes where it will have the greatest impact, *WSR* highlights five key pillars: transport, housing, energy, infrastructure, and innovation. These are identified as the core set of areas where investment will sustain existing growth and enable further value-add into the future. The pillars are strongly interconnected and reinforce each other.
11. *Canterbury Ambition* was developed by Business Canterbury with the support of the Mayoral Forum. It aims to convey a concise, high-level shared statement of ambition for Canterbury, and sets out three priorities that will help move towards that ambition, and five progress indicators and performance measures to track momentum.
12. Most of this content is shared by *World-stage Ready*, as the two documents came from the same joint work programme. The key additional value of *Canterbury Ambition* is that it provides a succinct ambition statement and a concise private sector-led perspective on the issues the Mayoral Forum explored at greater length in *WSR*.
13. The strong alignment of the content of both documents reflects the extent of the consensus Canterbury's local government and private sector leaders have reached on the region's major strengths, issues, opportunities, and priorities. This makes them a natural starting point to develop the core narrative and investment priorities that will be foundational to a Regional Deal or similar opportunities with other partners.

Assessment

14. As the longer and more detailed of the two foundational documents, *World-stage Ready* has much of the content needed to develop an investment narrative.

Context, value proposition, and case for change

15. The context section broadly captures the key features that explain Canterbury's existing strengths and build a compelling strategic case for change. At a high level, these are:
 - a. The location and natural environment features (inland, coastal, and marine) which provide resource inputs and physically position Canterbury as a gateway to the wider South Island
 - b. The set of existing economic sectors and comparative advantages that have emerged due to those physical factors, and key opportunities for further growth
 - c. The population and skill base that underpin that economy, the diversity of its people and their distribution across the region in different-sized communities
 - d. An appealing lifestyle available to its population that is unique among New Zealand regions
 - e. Dense networks of relationships and ways of working that support effective collaboration between businesses and other regional players.
16. Taken together, these features build a straightforward, evidence-based reasoning behind Canterbury's successes to date. This reasoning supports a regional value proposition that makes it clear how and why Canterbury differs from other regions.
17. The lifestyle element is an essential aspect of this value proposition. It highlights how the region has successfully acted on its strengths, as well as adding an intangible asset that attracts new people to move to Canterbury, expanding its skill base further.

The Canterbury Ambition and a strategic investment goal

18. In both foundational documents, all of these contextual features are distilled into a single statement of ambition: *Canterbury is the home of opportunity – where the environment, innovation, and quality of life thrive together.*
19. This both captures the region's current value proposition and provides a long-term strategic goal. Because Canterbury's unique lifestyle underpins its value proposition, maintaining and enhancing this lifestyle is also a coherent strategic goal that can give direction and meaning to planning, investment, and growth in the long term.
20. *World-stage Ready* also includes a longer purpose statement which helps define in material terms what the process of realising this ambition should look like:

"Together we can super-charge our region's growth and productivity, deliver much needed infrastructure, and increase the supply of quality and affordable housing; while safeguarding our social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing, and increasing our region's economic contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand."

The core investment opportunity

21. The ambition and purpose statements anchor the various investment opportunities communicated throughout *World-stage Ready*. If the long-term goal is to maintain Canterbury's prosperity and the lifestyle integral to its continued success, there is a need for continued investment in the areas that capitalise on the region's existing

strengths and help develop new ones in a way that delivers optimal long-term returns.

22. Two distinct kinds of investment opportunity flow from this need:

- f. In the near term, there is an opportunity to increase the gains Canterbury enjoys from its existing strengths by investing in the assets and infrastructure that will sustain continued success in those areas that are already doing well. These are the enabling features of infrastructure, housing, transport, and energy that are needed to maintain and expand existing activity.
- g. There is also an opportunity to invest in new and emergent areas that will, in the longer term, unlock further productivity gains for the regional economy, either through improvements to its existing sectors or by creating new value-added activities. Over time, this will enhance Canterbury's lifestyle advantages and move the region's economy, and therefore the New Zealand economy, further up the value chain.

Where and how this investment should happen

23. The foundational documents lay out various concepts – pillars, priorities, progress indicators, performance measures – that can be pulled together into a single story that explains how investment in Canterbury's unique opportunities should take place in order to achieve the ambition.

24. In broad terms, these describe where investment should focus (pillars), how investment in those sectors should take place in the near term (priorities), what key milestones will give the region evidence of progress (progress indicators), and what measures can be used to give the region's leaders assurance (performance measures).

Investment pillars

25. *World-stage Ready* identifies five pillars as priorities for investment in Canterbury: transport, housing, energy, infrastructure, and innovation. These were selected as the areas where investment will provide the foundation for future growth and ultimately enable the ambition.

26. Each pillar is presented as a package of investment opportunities with its own supporting investment logic. Each of these five, self-contained stories explains:

- a. what each pillar looks like in the specific context of Canterbury, and how it is a product of the region's unique mix of strengths
- b. why further investment is needed now
- c. where that investment might most usefully be directed
- d. how that investment will support the region's current and future success, and
- e. which other pillars it intersects with and how it reinforces their success.

27. Because the pillars reinforce each other, when put together they comprise a comprehensive investment programme that supports the overarching Canterbury

narrative by making it clear how coordinated action across all five areas will deliver greater and stronger benefits than five separate courses of action.

Priorities, progress indicators, and performance measures

28. *Canterbury Ambition* also contains broader sets of strategic metrics: three priorities (also included in *World-stage Ready*), five progress indicators, and five performance measures. The performance measures have placeholder figures for the time being, subject to further work.
29. These metrics are more focused on how investment in Canterbury should initially take place and identifying indicators that will provide evidence of progress and targets to measure against. This is in line with CA's greater focus on momentum and delivery than the longer-term strategic focus of *WSR*.
30. The pillars, priorities, progress indicators, and performance measures do not neatly align on a one-to-one basis. This means that, for example, a single priority might align with several pillars to differing degrees. These are put alongside each other in the following table.

Table 1: Investment-related elements and the different questions they ask

Pillar <i>Where should investment go?</i>	Priorities <i>How should that look and happen?</i>	Progress indicators <i>What evidence of progress do we need?</i>	Performance measures <i>What will tell us whether we are on track?</i>
Housing	Protecting and advancing our competitive advantage in affordable housing and lifestyle	Regional Spatial Plan completed with a focus on housing affordability and efficient business zoning	Housing affordability median multiple is X (median house price versus median income).
Transport	Investing ahead of demand in energy and connectivity infrastructure	Long term infrastructure and roading plans aligned and consenting frameworks in place	X% uplift in infrastructure activity across the region.
Infrastructure			X% of infrastructure pipeline funded and consented.
Energy		Energy strategy aligned across the region with a common consenting framework	Time to consent X% below national average or cost of consenting (to councils and business X% lower).
Innovation	Enabling innovation by ensuring regulation is fit for the future and aligned across the region	Alignment in regulations and standards across the region	X% increase in Foreign Direct Investment penetration across the region.
		Targeted Foreign Direct Investment attraction aligned across the region.	

31. None of the four categories are completely mutually exclusive, but they can be roughly grouped into general themes.

32. Broadly speaking, there is a housing theme, an overlapping transport / infrastructure theme, an energy theme (which strongly aligns with transport / infrastructure, but is also a vital component to enable energy-and knowledge-intensive innovation sectors), and an innovation theme.

33. These could be further distilled into two high-level investment themes that reflect the two unique investment opportunities outlined in paragraph 22:

- a. **Enabling pillars (housing, transport, and infrastructure)** sustain Canterbury's current economic prosperity and lifestyle. These areas require investment to maintain what Canterbury already has and keep ahead of demand as the population grows.

Council levers around spatial planning and consenting are key progress indicators in the near future, and the success of investment in these areas can be tracked through consent timeframes, price indices, and activity metrics.

- b. **Future-focused pillars (energy and innovation)** deliver benefits in the short term by enhancing Canterbury's existing economic and lifestyle advantages, and in the long term by positioning the region to lead New Zealand in emerging high-value technology and manufacturing, while also supporting national decarbonisation goals. These areas require investment to capitalise on Canterbury's existing advantages and unlock its full potential.

The time horizon to realise substantial value-add in these areas is likely to be longer. This means the short-term progress indicators are more focused on the strategic settings (plans, standards, regulations) that will provide the conditions to attract investment and support development in these less mature sectors in the long run.

34. This distinction may be useful to help potential investors distinguish between opportunities for short- and long-term returns on investment. However, as the five pillars have been the subject of extensive work across the region, the original five pillar model will be more recognisable to stakeholders.

35. It is therefore appropriate to retain the five pillars as the core of the investment themes for a Regional Deal proposal.

Place-based opportunities in each theme

36. This report, and Phase 1 of this work programme in general, is not intended to identify specific investments, interventions, assets, or projects that should be included in a Regional Deal proposal. That will happen in Phase 2, which will cover the development of the proposal itself.

37. However, there is a spatial element that will need to be considered as this work progresses. While all five pillars are relevant to all parts of Canterbury, the set of investments and interventions in each pillar will look different in different parts of the region.

38. Because each pillar is a broad theme, a pillar like innovation will cover a wide range of sectors and technologies, including but not limited to aerospace, biotech, aquaculture, agritech, and ocean technologies. The specific local features of different parts of Canterbury mean there will be more opportunities in some of those sectors than others. For example, it will make more sense for a rural inland community to look at supporting innovation in agritech than aquaculture.
39. This local diversity is an asset to Canterbury's economic potential, and a Regional Deal proposal for Canterbury would be strengthened if it could highlight strategic place-based investments that unlock economic potential and build amenity in different communities.
40. The challenge this raises is to ensure the pillars are simple enough to be easily understood at the national or international level, broad enough to be relevant at the regional level, and nuanced enough to be relevant at the local level. This should be addressed through the remaining workstreams of Phase 1 which cover the scoping and staging of how the Regional Deal proposal will be built out in Phase 2.

Proposed approach

41. Table 2 contains the skeleton narrative that has been drafted based on the context, unique value proposition, ambition statement, investment opportunities, pillars and strategic metrics across both World-stage Ready and Canterbury Ambition.
42. In short, this narrative sets out Canterbury's context, how these have led to its strengths and competitive advantages, the unique opportunity that arises from these, the investment priorities that should be the focus of this opportunity, and the logic that explains how and why investment in these priorities will deliver optimal results and realise the shared regional ambition.
43. It keeps the five investment pillars of transport, housing, energy, infrastructure, and innovation from World-stage Ready as its core priorities, supported by the metrics in Canterbury Ambition.

Table 2: Draft narrative structure for a Regional Investment Prospectus / Regional Deal

Section	Content / purpose Core narrative question	Reference point in WSR / CA
Context and conditions	<i>What is Canterbury's context?</i> Outlines Canterbury's background and context in terms of its existing asset base. Broadly covers the geographic / spatial, environmental, built, and human factors (including lifestyle) specific to the region.	See WSR pages 5, 8-10, 19, 23.
Economic advantages and potential	<i>What does Canterbury perform unusually well, and where else can it grow in future?</i> Explains how Canterbury's asset base has led to certain competitive advantages and translated into its existing economic strengths. Highlights where these strengths are already on display, and identifies new areas where there is strong potential.	See WSR pages 11-13, 31-32, 35, 37.
Regional value proposition	<i>What is the specific Canterbury opportunity?</i> Builds on previous sections to highlight the core strategic proposition of the narrative: what is the distinctive opportunity Canterbury offers to government, investors, firms, and skilled individuals? Sets out the specific regional value proposition that distinguishes Canterbury both from other parts of New Zealand and globally.	See WSR pages 3, 5-8 12. See <i>Canterbury Ambition</i> (in full).
Strategic investment case / priorities	<i>Where should investment in Canterbury be focused?</i> Identifies the priority areas for investment that will protect and scale Canterbury's advantages. Guides the investors, individuals, and institutions drawn in by the value proposition so that new capital / human resources add optimal value to the region.	See WSR pages 8, 15-37. See <i>Canterbury Ambition</i> (in full).
Intervention logic / theory of change	<i>How does investment in the pillars actually translate into outcomes?</i> Lays out the logic for how investment in each pillar will translate into improved outcomes for Canterbury (higher productivity, stronger firms, better jobs, new value-add activities, enhanced liveability). Explains how the pillars reinforce each other and the systems that allow people, goods, capital, ideas, and energy to flow to / through the region.	See WSR pages 8, 15-37. See <i>Canterbury Ambition</i> (in full).
Integrated regional proposition / call to action	<i>What is the single succinct story formed by all of the previous steps?</i> Recap that covers the logical flow of the other sections and stakes out the case for action by potential investment partners.	

Next steps

45. The skeleton narrative should be regarded as a high-level early draft, subject to further feedback from the Working Group, Economic Development Forum, Chief Executives Forum, and Mayoral Forum.
46. This report will also be reviewed and updated as part of Workstream 3d, which will examine the wider body of work and evidence across Canterbury and test whether the proposed core narrative and strategic priorities are fit for purpose. Changes may be made where gaps or differences are identified through that literature review.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Dan Gordon, Chair Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group
Jesse Burgess, Chair Climate Change Working Group

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to present:
 - a. the findings of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan strategic review and the recommended option to deliver year 3
 - b. a recommendation to proceed with procuring the Resilience Explorer tool for a one-year trial (Action 1)
 - c. draft emissions reduction actions for the regional transition to low emissions plan for feedback (Action 2)
 - d. the draft scope for the development of a regional blue-green network plan (Action 4)
 - e. the implementation progress and budget summary report for quarter 4 of year 2 (FY 2025/2026).

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **receives the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan strategic review report**
2. **approves delivery of Year 3 of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan through a balanced delivery approach (Option C) as recommended by the Chief Executives Forum: proceeding with a total budget of \$624,607 (comprised of \$114,368 in year 3 council contributions and \$510,239 in year 2 carry forwards)**
3. **agrees how Year 3 council contributions will be shared between councils**
4. **approves the procurement of the Resilience Explorer tool (Action 1) for a one-year regional pilot, at a cost not exceeding \$250,000**
5. **provides feedback on the draft emissions reduction actions for the transition to low emissions plan (Action 2)**

6. notes that Canterbury councils' subscription to the Local Emissions Data Platform will end in October 2026 and not progress into Year 3
7. approves either:
 - a. the procurement of a regional blue-green network plan (Action 4) based on the draft scope for procurement, if recommendation 2 (Option C) is approved and full funding is available for the action
or
 - b. if recommendation 2 is not approved and there is reduced funding available (Option B) for the development of a blue-green network plan (Action 4) in Year 3, either:
 - i. pause procurement until additional funding is secured to enable the plan's full completion
or
 - ii. procure a partial plan based on available budget, with amended scope to be approved by the Climate Change Working Group convenor
8. note the disestablishment of the *It's Time, Canterbury* platform and the subsequent closing of Action 5.1, and that the Canterbury Regional Council will instead lead the delivery of regional climate change messaging through alternate channels
9. receives the quarterly Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan implementation progress report and accompanying budget summary for quarter 4, Year 2.

Background

2. The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP) was approved by the Mayoral Forum in August 2024. The CCPP's second year of implementation is now complete, cementing the foundational work needed for Year 3.
3. Actions are progressed through limited in-kind resource provided by councils, predominantly through the Climate Change Working Group, with dedicated leads for each action. Canterbury Regional Council provides dedicated resource to support overall implementation and co-ordinated delivery.
4. A strategic review of the CCPP commenced in March 2026 to assess whether the actions remain fit for purpose in a changed policy and funding environment, and to assess the funding requirements for Year 3. The strategic review has since been completed and its findings and proposed next steps for Year 3 are outlined in Attachment 1.

5. Advice on delivery options for Year 3 have been considered by the Policy and CE Forums. Details of the review, discussions and recommendations can be found in the next section.

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan strategic review and Year 3 delivery approach

Strategic review

6. A strategic review of the CCPP was undertaken in March – May 2026. An update on the review process was provided at the May Mayoral Forum meeting. The Mayoral Forum requested consideration of an option to deliver Year 3 if additional funding was not granted.
7. The context surrounding the review included the significant reforms across local government, namely Simplifying Local Government and resource management, and also changes across emergency management, climate adaptation, and emissions reduction. It is recognised that councils are facing considerable funding and resourcing challenges.
8. The review took a high level and strategic look at the plan and tested whether current actions are still relevant, whether they are prioritised in the right order, and whether they align with new legislation, national direction and funding settings. The review also identified any risks, gaps or opportunities that may influence how the region works together on climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.
9. The strategic review found:
 - the CCPP remains valid and is a valuable mechanism for coordinating regional climate action and maintaining alignment with national direction
 - sub-actions most closely aligned to statutory planning, adaptation, risk, emissions reduction, and implementation delivery should continue as planned (9 sub-actions)
 - four sub-actions remain relevant but require rescoping or adjustment to reflect the changing environment
 - four sub-actions can be discontinued – three of these are either being progressed within other sub-actions or embedded across the plan as a whole
 - variability in council capacity and emerging fiscal constraints will require a more focused and prioritised programme
 - continued regional collaboration provides efficiencies and supports better preparedness for legislative and policy changes.
10. The recommended approach for each action is outlined below and can be achieved with the Comprehensive funding approach (Option A) noted in paragraph 13.

Proceed as planned:

- 1.1: Develop a Canterbury-wide climate and natural hazard risk tool.
- 2.3: Work with partners, communities, and key stakeholders to build a regional low-emissions transition plan that supports equitable, inclusive local pathways to a thriving, climate-resilient region meeting emissions reduction targets.
- 3.1: Develop and implement a best practice approach for councils in Canterbury to work effectively and efficiently together with communities on adaptation planning and implementation (*though with revised wording of "Enable councils in Canterbury to work effectively and efficiently together with communities on adaptation planning and implementation" to make the purpose of the sub-action clearer.*)
- 4.2: Develop a blue-green network plan for Canterbury and accompanying guidance to support locally-led implementation.
- 6.1: Understand the climate action requirements of Papatipu Rūnanga across Canterbury.
- 6.2: Support councils to work in partnership with Papatipu Rūnanga to integrate their requirements into local climate action planning.
- 7.1: Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations across all council business including decisions, policies, projects, procurement, and infrastructure development.
- 10: Assemble and coordinate an implementation team to ensure the successful delivery and implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (*funding associated with this action relates to project management costs*).

Proceed but with amendments to timeframe:

- 5.2: Collaborate with Civil Defence and Emergency Management in Canterbury to produce communications materials that integrate climate action and resilience to natural hazards (*with an updated timeframe to reflect delivery in 2027 rather than 2026*)
- 9.1: Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan which includes the co-development of climate related indicators appropriate to Canterbury (*with an updated delivery timeframe to reflect the delays to this action in 2025/26*).

Close or discontinue:

- 2.1: Collate data and develop models to prepare greenhouse gas emissions inventories and identify emissions reduction pathways for Canterbury to support New Zealand's national greenhouse gas commitments.
- 4.2a: Maximise opportunities to collaborate with key stakeholders to provide guidance on blue-green infrastructure placement and hazard resilience investment.
- 4.2b: Collaborate and align with Greater Christchurch Partnership and key stakeholders to deliver a blue-green network.

- 5.1: Continue to develop the *It's time, Canterbury* initiative into a comprehensive hub for climate education and collective action across Canterbury.
- 8.1: Advocate to central government for funding to be made available to address the gap between current local government funding and what is needed for the comprehensive local government climate action that is required in the future¹.

Pause until funding available following year 3:

- 1.2: Update the Canterbury climate change risk and urgency assessment. The commencement of this sub-action is dependent on the decision to procure a risk visualisation tool, and a budget for it has therefore not yet been estimated.
 - 4.2c: Investigate the feasibility of establishing blue-green infrastructure on council-owned land, including identifying priority locations for implementation across Canterbury. This may be able to be completed in year 3 as part of sub-action 4.2 (see Option C below).
11. The full review report, including analytical framework, methodology, results, risks, dependencies and limitations, can be found in Attachment 1.
 12. The findings and recommendations in the strategic review have been endorsed by the Climate Change Working Group.

Delivery options

13. In June, two options were presented to the Policy Forum:

- a. **Option A: Comprehensive delivery** (recommended in the strategic review) – continue as planned with a revised Year 3 contribution now more refined costs and timelines are available. The new contribution from councils would be \$244,968 (of the originally planned \$540,000 Year 3 contribution), taking the total for Year 3 to \$755,207 including carry forward.

This option most closely aligns with the findings of the review, allowing most of the CCPP to continue to be delivered as a coherent package for Year 3.

- b. **Option B: Scaled-back delivery** – proceed with carry-forward funding only. No additional Year 3 funding required with a total of \$510,239 available.

The table below sets out the impact of delivering the Plan under this approach, in comparison to proceeding in line with the strategic review:

14. The Policy Forum requested consideration of a third 'mid-range' option, that included a small financial contribution to Year 3 from councils.

¹ This action has been realigned from advocating to government to providing a climate action funding advisory support function through the Climate Change Working Group, as recommended in the CCPP strategic review.

- a. **Option C: Balanced delivery** – carry-forward funding of \$510,239, plus \$114,368 in additional council contributions to Year 3. Total budget would be \$624,607.
15. At the Policy Forum, Selwyn District Council advised CCPP Year 3 contribution funds have not been committed in the 2026/27 Annual Plan. In-kind resourcing will continue, noting Selwyn District Council leads Action 1 Understanding climate risks and improving resilience.
 16. The three options were then discussed by the CE Forum in August. Most conversation centred around Options B & C which is the focus of this paper.
 - a. Option A (Comprehensive delivery) – arguments for and against this option were not discussed at the CE Forum
 - b. Option B (scaled-back delivery) – carry forward funding only. Arguments for this option noted that this is the only option that continues with all councils contributing financially in Year 3, maintaining the collaborative, regional intent. There were queries as to the whether all funds could be spent or committed in Year 3 given the current underspend. If there was a reduction in scope or outcome, some councils may reduce in-kind resource accordingly
 - c. Option C (balanced delivery) – a small additional contribution would enable achievement of the original outcomes while acknowledging the financial constraints. Procurement of the REx tool and BGN Plan are ready to progress pending funding decisions. This would need consideration of how the contribution would be split across councils. It was acknowledged that if Selwyn District Council are not contributing financially to Year 3, other councils may need to review their commitment also.
 17. Both Options A and B would focus on key actions 1 (risk visualisation), 2 (emissions reduction), 4 (blue-green network), 6 (supporting Papatipu Rūnanga) and 10 (project management) and where actions can proceed with in-kind resourcing only (actions 5.2, 7.1 and 8.1).
 18. Action 1 provides risk information that can be used as an input to identify nature-based solutions as part of the BGN Plan. It supports high-priority areas for adaptation planning.
 19. Options B & C are compared in the table below and include the reallocated \$70,600 no longer needed for LEDP (Action 2.1):

Actions	Option B – scaled-back delivery (carry forward funds only \$510,239)		Option C – balanced approach (carry forward funds of \$510,239 + \$114,368)		Comparison of Options B & C
	Year 3 budget	Year 3 deliverables/outcomes	Year 3 budget	Year 3 deliverables/outcomes	
1	\$250,000	Regional tool built, tested and evaluated by councils (for one year)	\$250,000	Regional tool built, tested and evaluated by councils (for one year)	Both options remove the contingency funding for risk tool development.
2.1	\$0	Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) annual subscription	\$0	Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) annual subscription	Now discontinued.
2.3	\$19,000	Completion and publication of regional low-emissions transition plan	\$19,000	Completion and publication of regional low-emissions transition plan	There is no impact on the development of the low-emissions transition plan in Year 3. There is no allocated funding to support implementation.
3	\$0	Situational analysis of adaptation practice Support adaptation practice	\$0	Situational analysis of adaptation practice Support adaptation practice	Delivery relies on in-kind staff contributions.
4.2	\$150,000	Partial development of Blue-Green network plan in Year 3	\$270,000	Full development of Blue-Green network plan in Year 3	Option B would see insufficient funding to complete development of the Plan, requiring significant additional funding to be sourced for the project to be completed. Neither option includes implementation of the plan.
5	In-kind staff resource	Development and launch of a toolkit for district Emergency Management Officers	In-kind staff resource	Development and launch of a toolkit for district Emergency Management Officers	No impact.
6	\$20,000	Understand Rūnanga climate requirements	\$20,000	Understand Rūnanga climate requirements	This is a reduction from the original \$50,000. Reduced funding may limit engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga,

					which could lead to gaps in understanding climate requirements and further delays to other actions.
7	In-kind staff resource	Development and launch of supporting material for councils	In-kind staff resource	Development and launch of supporting material for councils	No impact.
8	In-kind staff resource	Realignment of action to embed climate action funding advisory support within the working group	In-kind staff resource	Realignment of action to embed climate action funding advisory support within the working group	No impact.
9	\$0	Annual Report for Year 3	\$0	Annual Report for Year 3	No funding for the implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, significantly reducing the ability to track outcomes over time.
10	\$65,606	Project management	\$65,606	Project management	No impact.

20. The impact of both Options B and C on delivery, compared to Option A, is the removal of spending on:

- a. the contingency available for the risk visualisation tool pilot (Action 1)
- b. initial implementation funding for the regional low-emissions transition plan actions (Action 2),
- c. adaptation planning guidance (Action 3)
- d. implementation of the monitoring and evaluation plan (Action 9)

but noting that,

- e. Action 4 can be completed under Option C, which enables full development of the blue-green network plan. Option B would require either pausing procurement until additional funding is secured to complete the full plan, or procuring a partial plan with an amended scope based on available budget, and
- f. Action 3 can continue solely on in-kind resources but will mean progress is dependent on council staff availability.

21. The key risks and dependencies with a scaled-back approach (option B) are:

- the CCPP would no longer be delivered as an integrated package of action, reducing collective regional impact. Collective impact is a key benefit of collaborating together as 11 councils
- adaptation planning work becomes solely reliant on in-kind resourcing
- a significant reduction in funding for the blue-green network plan would mean either that the project's progress becomes reliant on sourcing additional funding, or if this is not possible, that the output produced does not achieve project objectives outlined in the CCPP. This would impact its value to provide direct local benefit to councils, and feed into coordinated adaptation planning and regional spatial planning
- not funding the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation plan will result in a lack of knowledge about the impacts, outcomes and effectiveness of the CCPP's work programmes for the region over the short, medium and long term

22. At the CE Forum, Option B (scaled-back delivery, rollover funds only) was put to the vote and not carried, with five votes apiece.

23. Option C (rollover funds plus \$114,368) was voted as the preferred option with five votes in favour, four against, and Selwyn District Council abstained.

24. If Option C is approved by the Mayoral Forum, a revised split will need to be agreed by each contributing council.

25. It has been signalled by some councils that in-kind resource is under pressure and may not be available to the current extent to support or deliver actions within the plan in Year 3. In particular, this may impact delivery of key actions 1 and 4 which are ready for procurement.

Long Term Plan funding considerations

26. None of the options consider ongoing, medium or long-term funding for actions that require continued implementation or management. The strategic review did not specify funding requirements for continuation of actions in future Long-Term Plans, as this was determined outside the scope of review approved by the Policy Forum.
27. The review did, however, identify which actions are likely to require funding past year 3, particularly for ongoing tool licensing and implementation of the plans. This is provided below for context:
- sub-action 1.1: ongoing costs for the risk tool are estimated at \$230,000 per annum after the one-year pilot
 - sub-action 1.2: costs to update the Canterbury climate change risk and urgency assessment are not yet estimated
 - sub-action 2.3: implementation costs for the actions within the Transition to Low-Emissions Plan will be considered once the Plan is complete. Funding for implementation of the Plan's actions has not been included in the CCPP budget
 - Action 4: high level implementation costs for the blue-green network plan will be estimated in Year 3.

CCPP implementation progress and budget update

28. Overall, implementation of the CCPP is progressing well, with significant progress made on Action 1 (risk visualisation tool), Action 2 (emissions reduction), and Action 4 (nature-based solutions), as outlined below.
29. Further information on progress, upcoming deliverables, key milestones for all actions is provided in Attachment 4.
30. Total Year 2 expenditure was \$348,271. This is lower than forecast, particularly due to the time taken to progress Actions 1 and 4 which have significant funding attached, noting that these two actions are now ready for procurement pending approval.
31. This has resulted in a Year 2 underspend of \$510,239. In May the Mayoral agreed to carry this funding into Year 3. Detailed financial information is provided in Table 2 of Attachment 4.

Procurement of risk visualisation tool (sub-action 1.1)

32. Sub-action 1.1 requires the scoping and development of a Canterbury-wide risk visualisation tool to improve councils' understanding of climate hazards and risks in the region to improve resilience.
33. Preliminary scoping for the regional risk tool was completed in December 2025, which found the Resilience Explorer tool (REx) as the preferred option due to its strong modelling capabilities.
34. Christchurch City Council and Waimakariri District Council already use the tool and have renewed their contracts for a further five years, and Selwyn District Council is now also exploring procurement of the tool.
35. The data sufficiency review was then completed in June 2026 to determine whether councils across Canterbury have sufficient existing data to receive value from investing in the REx tool.
36. The review found that regional deployment of the REx tool is well supported at the foundational level. All councils can identify risks and estimate the impacts in some form (some councils will be able to more fully use this level of capability than others) across asset management, adaptation planning, land use planning, and emergency management. This meets the minimum viable product requirements.
37. The review has been shared with councils through the Climate Change Working Group. Councils may choose whether or how they address some of the gaps identified.
38. The business case sets out the benefits and expected outcomes of using the tool, and the economic value of doing so as part of a group procurement.
39. Key benefits of the tool:
 - REx supports councils across multiple functions:
 - o Emergency management: simulate hazard scenarios, map cascading service disruptions, and coordinate response with a shared real-time risk view
 - o Land use planning: location-specific hazard data for consenting, overlay current and future hazards with built assets for regional spatial plans
 - o Asset management: identify critical assets at risk, understand interconnected failures, and prioritise renewals and investment
 - o Adaptation planning: compare adaptation options (protect, accommodate, retreat) and build business cases for adaptation actions, eg for council assets
 - REx creates information that will feed into the evolving statutory landscape, including identifying priority areas for adaptation plans in the Regional Spatial Plan, and the Climate Change Amendment Bill requirements for councils to undertake adaptation plans. It also generates audit-ready documentation to help meet disclosure obligations with defensible evidence.

- REx consolidates data into a single platform with live data links, which significantly reduces administrative burden for councils with limited resources. The pilot brings every council up to a consistent Level 2 baseline, so smaller councils get the same capability as larger ones without needing to build it themselves.
 - Use of the tool at this capability exceeds traditional hazard mapping and GIS tools, including impact assessment, risk comparison, and prioritisation using a common regional methodology.
 - The tool provides a shared regional capability for understanding and assessing climate and natural hazard risks, supporting more consistent and evidence-based decision-making across Canterbury councils and boundaries.
40. Piloting the REx tool for one year will enable a staged investment process through implementation and testing. Once benefits, limitations, and council demand have been tested in practice, ongoing arrangements can be considered with those councils that are interested.
 41. Criteria for assessing the success of the pilot will be drafted, pending approval to procure, and each council can decide whether to continue at the end of the pilot. If a council opts out after the pilot, the findings and baseline risk assessments from the year will still be valuable outcomes to be built on.
 42. A demonstration of the tool by Urban Intelligence was provided to chief executives and regional fora members on 23 July to support consideration of this action.
 43. A regional procurement approach delivers significant economies of scale, reducing the cost of the tool for participating councils (noting that existing users, the Christchurch City Council and Waimakariri District Council, sit outside of this agreement) compared with individual or smaller-group procurement.
 44. Both Options B & C for Year 3 delivery, outlined in paragraphs 35 and 36, cover costs for the pilot.
 45. Subject to the Mayoral Forum's decision to proceed, procurement would commence immediately following approval on 28 August. It is anticipated that tool set up and staff training would be complete by December 2026, and pilot testing phase would begin in January 2027.

Emissions reduction (Action 2)

Draft regional low-emissions transition plan actions (sub-action 2.3)

46. The regional low-emissions transition plan aims to provide a coordinated regional approach to emissions reduction, identifying where actions can strengthen and complement councils' existing efforts to support Canterbury's transition to a climate-resilient, low-emissions region. The plan is designed to work within and alongside

existing council work programmes and partnerships where possible, with new actions identified where gaps exist.

47. Following the Mayoral Forum's approval of the draft strategic framework for the transition plan in May 2026, the project team has focused on developing the list of potential emissions reduction actions for inclusion in the plan.
48. Fifteen draft actions have been developed (appended as Attachment 2). The actions span agriculture, energy, transport, waste, cross-sector themes, and advocacy, across six functions: governance and regional partnerships; planning, regulation and consenting; infrastructure, assets and council operations; waste, procurement and circular economy; community, business and behaviour change; and data monitoring and evidence.
49. The draft actions present a comprehensive, multi-sector emissions reduction framework for Canterbury that starts with low-regret, enabling actions in the short term and builds toward structural/system change over time, aligning with current government reforms and timeframes to support the implementation of an enduring action plan.
50. Councils are largely positioned as enablers, coordinators, and advocates, and successful implementation will rely on strong partnerships across local and central government, mana whenua, industry, and community organisations.
51. The draft action set includes a mix of funded (5 actions, resourced through existing council work programmes), partially funded (5 actions, underway through existing work programmes but requiring additional support to fully deliver) and currently unfunded actions (5 actions).
52. Funded and partially funded actions can largely be progressed through existing work programmes, particularly waste services, spatial planning, asset management and regional emissions capability. Remaining actions would be new initiatives requiring dedicated resourcing and a designated lead before they can commence.
53. Implementation options are being developed and will be considered by the Policy Forum in September for further refinement and recommendations to reach the Mayoral Forum in November.
54. The Transition to Low-Emissions Plan closely aligns with the Mayoral Forum's Regional Energy Action Plan, recognising energy is a key lever for reducing regional emissions. Action scoping and delivery considerations are being progressed concurrently to support integrated planning and implementation.

Process to develop draft actions

55. The draft actions were developed through a multi-stage process that built on previously identified transition risks and opportunities.
56. Multiple workshops were held with council staff to filter a long list of opportunities into a shortlist. Shortlisted opportunities were further refined with council staff and the Climate

Change Working Group, reflecting iterative refinements and ongoing conversations with council staff around feasibility.

57. The draft actions were presented to the Policy Forum and the elected member Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group meetings in June, and CE Forum in August. Feedback received so far includes:
 - general support for the set of actions, particularly where actions are clearly connected to core council functions and existing areas of influence
 - acknowledgment that the draft set of actions is feasible
 - identification of some gaps in the actions, particularly around integrated spatial and transport planning.
58. Externally, sector stakeholders were provided an opportunity to give their feedback by email on the draft actions in August.
59. All feedback will form part of the final draft actions that will be presented to regional fora in the September-November round of meetings.

Local Emissions Data Platform initiative (sub-action 2.1)

60. Canterbury councils have been participating in the Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) initiative since October 2025, a nationwide collaboration that provides annual greenhouse gas emissions inventories, data visualisations, and policy scenario modelling.
61. It supports councils to understand district emissions profiles, meet voluntary reporting needs, and plan emissions reduction using a consistent regional methodology.
62. A majority of councils across the country have confirmed they will not continue into Year 3 due to funding constraints or concerns about the quality of deliverables. As a result, remaining councils would need to cover a significant funding shortfall.
63. In August, the CE Forum agreed with the Policy Forum's decision to withdraw from LEDP and re-invest the \$70,600 into other CCPP actions and to absorb the funding allocation into broader considerations.

Development of a regional blue green network plan (sub-action 4.2)

64. Sub-action 4.2 will see a blue-green network (BGN) plan developed for Canterbury, along with accompanying guidance to support locally led implementation.
65. By mapping opportunities to enhance climate resilience, biodiversity, water quality, and natural hazard management, the BGN Plan can help inform long-term decisions about growth, infrastructure investment, land use, and climate adaptation.

66. The proposed planning reforms recognise the importance of integrating natural environment, land-use, and infrastructure planning, creating a significant opportunity for the BGN Plan to inform Regional Spatial Planning and subsequent land use and natural environment plans.
67. In this way, the BGN Plan can support a coordinated, region-wide approach to protecting and enhancing natural capital while ensuring future development occurs in locations that are resilient, sustainable, and aligned with Canterbury's long-term environmental and community outcomes.
68. Waitaha Canterbury's BGN plan will provide a region-wide, strategic framework for identifying where Nature-based Solutions (NbS) may be protected, restored, enhanced, and integrated to support a climate-resilient, low-emissions Canterbury. It will seek to address the wider functional blue-green network and the role of NbS, including for flood protection, across multiple land tenures and ecosystems, and will not be limited to public open space alone.
69. As part of foundational work for the BGN plan, the project team completed a literature review to inform integrated resilience and nature-based solutions, and a region-wide BGN inventory to identify related work that has already been undertaken or is in progress.
70. Both documents feed into the evidence base needed to develop a regional BGN plan and have been shared with councils through the Climate Change Working Group. They will be made available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website in due course.
71. The project is now at a stage where procurement of the network plan can commence. Attachment 3 provides a summary of the scope for procurement. The summary provides information on the project, its timeframes, the capability and capacity sought from potential suppliers, matters of significance to the CCPP as the project progresses, and the project's key deliverables. Full scope details will be set out in the Request for Proposal.
72. If approved, procurement will start immediately, with the successful supplier expected to begin the project in November 2026. The final Blue Green Network Plan is planned to be available for consideration at the June – August 2027 regional fora meetings.
73. The draft scope is based on the Option C budget of \$270,000. If Option B (rollover funds only) is preferred, the \$150,000 budget would mean either additional funding from another source is required before procurement could commence, or the scope would be limited to delivery of only some of the key deliverables, and would be paused until future funding is available to complete it.

Risk assessment and legal compliance

74. No legal or compliance risks have been identified for the recommendations provided in this paper. Commentary on risks for the actions in the CCPP is provided in the quarterly

progress report (Attachment 4). Commentary on the risks of delivering year 3 of the Plan under Options A, B and C are set out in the sections of the paper relevant to this matter.

Next steps

75. If additional Year 3 contributions are agreed (Option C), including allocation across councils, invoices will be sent to councils accordingly.
76. If a trial of the Resilience Explorer tool (Action 1) is agreed, procurement will begin.
77. Draft actions for the Transition to Low-Emissions Plan, and implementation considerations (Action 2), will be presented to the Policy Forum in September and onto the CE and Mayoral Forums in October and November 2026.
78. If full funding for the development of a Blue Green Network Plan (Action 4) is approved, procurement will begin immediately with the project to commence in November 2026. Should partial funding be approved, scoping of the BGN Plan will be reviewed by the Climate Change Working Group and approved by the Convenor.

Attachments

- **Attachment 1:** CCPP Strategic Review Report
- **Attachment 2:** Draft actions for Transition to Low-Emissions Plan
- **Attachment 3:** Blue-Green Network Plan procurement scope summary
- **Attachment 4:** Implementation report and budget summary for Year 2, Quarter 4

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Strategic Review 2026

Purpose of the Strategic Review

1. This report outlines the results of the 2026 Strategic Review of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP).
2. The purpose of the review was to ensure the CCPP remains relevant, prioritised, and aligned with the rapidly evolving national policy, legislative, and funding environment, while continuing to support coordinated regional climate action.
3. The review is designed to inform Canterbury Policy, Chief Executives and Mayoral Forum's decision-making, particularly in relation to confirming Year 3 (2026/27) funding requirements and providing strategic advice on whether current actions should continue, be adjusted, or reprioritised.

Key points

4. The Strategic Review demonstrates that the CCPP has produced meaningful results in its first two years and provides value as a mechanism for coordinating regional climate action and maintaining alignment with national direction.
5. The CCPP has strengthened collaboration across councils, reduced duplication, and supported a more coordinated regional approach to climate action. Outputs have already begun to inform a strong regional evidence base for future actions and decisions, while sector leadership and knowledge have been shared at both national and international levels.
6. It is recommended that actions most closely aligned to statutory planning, adaptation, risk, emissions reduction, and implementation continue as planned. Other actions remain relevant but may require rescoping or adjustment to reflect the changing policy and funding environment. Continued regional collaboration provides efficiencies and supports widespread preparedness for legislative and policy changes.

Context and rationale

7. The CCPP was endorsed in August 2024 as a three-year regional programme to support a thriving, climate-resilient and low-emissions Canterbury. It comprises a set of coordinated actions jointly funded (\$1.47 million) by councils through Long Term Plans.
8. Since its adoption, the operating context for local government has shifted significantly. Recent proposals and decisions on national reforms have introduced changes across resource management, emergency management, climate adaptation frameworks, infrastructure funding, and local government roles and responsibilities. These reforms

materially affect how councils plan, invest, and respond to climate risks and emissions reduction objectives.

9. At the same time, councils are facing increasing fiscal pressures, uneven levels of organisational capability, and growing access to improved data and analytical tools. These changes create both risks and opportunities, necessitating a targeted review to ensure the CCPP remains fit for purpose.

Scope of Strategic Review

10. The Strategic Review was designed as a focused and proportionate assessment, recognising both the tight timeframes associated with council annual planning processes and the need to provide timely strategic advice.
11. The review assessed:
 - the strategic alignment of CCPP actions with national reforms and regional priorities
 - the effectiveness of the current delivery model and council collaboration arrangements
 - the prioritisation, sequencing, and continued relevance of actions
 - progress against intended outcomes and implementation milestones
 - interdependencies, co-benefits, and gaps across the programme
 - the affordability and allocation of Year 3 funding.
12. The review did not include a full redesign of the CCPP, detailed technical modelling, or operational performance assessment. It also did not consider funding requirements beyond year 4 of the current programme.

Summary of progress to date

13. The review confirmed that the CCPP has delivered a range of foundational outcomes since 2024. These include the development of shared regional data platforms, climate risk and vulnerability assessments, and improved evidence bases to support decision-making.
14. The programme has strengthened collaboration across councils, reduced duplication, and supported a more coordinated regional approach to climate action. It has also contributed to sector leadership and knowledge sharing at both national and international levels. The table below highlights key outcomes from the CCPP thus far:

Action	Outcome
Action 1: Understanding	• Completed preliminary scoping for a regional climate risk tool to support evidence based land use and spatial planning,

climate risks and improving resilience	climate adaptation, asset and emergency management, and long-term investment decisions. Progressed a Canterbury-wide data inventory/data sufficiency review to understand climate and natural hazard data availability and gaps and inform the development of a regional risk tool.
Action 2: Emissions reduction and transition planning	- Procured a 2-year trial of a local emissions data platform, accessible by all Canterbury Councils, to produce consistent regional and district level emissions inventories and model reduction pathways. - Produced a regional strategic emissions reduction overview to inform a regional low emissions transition plan. - Delivered a transition risks and opportunities assessment, including engagement with key stakeholders such as waste, transport, agriculture industry and community partners. - Started development of a regional emissions reduction strategic framework, including identifying priority emissions reduction actions.
Action 4: Nature-based solutions	- Developed a Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Waitaha Canterbury's Ecosystems, the first time this has been done spatially in New Zealand. This includes an ArcGIS StoryMap, training resources for councils, and guidance on the practical application of the assessment. - Completed a blue-green network literature review to inform integrated resilience and nature-based solutions. - Produced a region-wide blue green network inventory.
Action 5: Education and Advocacy	A review of effectiveness of the It's time, Canterbury platform.
Action 9. Monitoring and Evaluation	Developed a CCPP monitoring and evaluation plan.
Regional influence and sector leadership	- Shared Canterbury's collaborative climate action journey at Adaptation Futures 2025, contributing to international knowledge exchange and raising the region's profile. - Presented the CCPP at the Canterbury Lifelines Annual Hui to strengthen alignment between climate resilience and lifelines infrastructure planning.

Analytical Framework

15. A consistent analytical framework was applied across all actions to assess their ongoing relevance, impact, and feasibility.
16. Each action was reviewed against criteria including:
 - strategic relevance

- alignment with statutory obligations, emerging legislative and policy direction, and related work programmes
 - contribution to regional climate outcomes
 - deliverability within current capability and funding constraints
 - duplication/added regional value
 - resourcing and funding implications
 - linkages with other actions and wider regional priorities.
17. Based on the results of the review, it was determined the recommendation would be to *proceed as planned*, *proceed with amendments*, or *discontinue* for each action.

Methodology

18. The review was undertaken through a structured, five-phase process between February and June 2026, aligned with regional governance and decision-making cycles. Key steps included:
- confirming scope and parameters for the review
 - undertaking a rapid assessment of Year 3 funding requirements
 - completing action-level reviews and a broader policy and evidence scan
 - testing findings through a Canterbury Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) workshop
 - synthesising findings into consolidated recommendations for the Canterbury Policy Forum (CPF).
19. This approach enabled a balance between evidence-based analysis and practitioner input, while remaining proportionate to available time and resources.

Stakeholder Engagement

20. Stakeholder engagement was targeted and proportionate to the scope and timeframe of the review.
21. The Canterbury Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) acted as the primary forum for review and testing of findings. Engagement was also undertaken with subject matter experts to ensure that key perspectives were reflected. Stakeholders were invited to provide written feedback and engage in targeted discussions and workshop-based testing of emerging recommendations.

Key Findings

22. The review found that:

- the CCPP remains valid and is a valuable mechanism for coordinating regional climate action and maintaining alignment with national direction
- sub-actions most closely aligned to statutory planning, adaptation, risk, emissions reduction and implementation delivery should continue as planned (9 sub-actions in total)
- four sub-actions remain relevant but require rescoping or adjustment to reflect the changing policy and funding environment
- there are clear opportunities to strengthen linkages between actions and optimise sequencing and delivery
- variability in council capacity and emerging fiscal constraints will require a more focused and prioritised programme
- continued regional collaboration provides efficiencies and supports better preparedness for legislative and policy changes.

23. The following table outlines high-level recommendations for the future direction, prioritisation, and delivery of the CCPP. The complete summary of recommendations for each sub-action is contained in Appendix 1, including justification for the recommendations and advice on Year 3 and Year 4 funding requirements to support council annual plan decisions.

Recommendation	Sub-action
Proceed with delivery as planned (9 sub-actions)	1.1: Develop a Canterbury-wide climate and natural hazard risk tool. 2.1: Collate data and develop models to prepare greenhouse gas emissions inventories and identify emissions reduction pathways for Canterbury to support New Zealand's national greenhouse gas commitments. 2.3: Work with partners, communities, and key stakeholders to build a regional low-emissions transition plan that supports equitable, inclusive local pathways to a thriving, climate-resilient region meeting emissions reduction targets. 3.1: Develop and implement a best practice approach for councils in Canterbury to work effectively and efficiently together with communities on adaptation planning and implementation. 4.2: Develop a blue-green network plan for Canterbury and accompanying guidance to support locally-led implementation. 6.1: Understand the climate action requirements of Papatipu Rūnanga across Canterbury. 6.2: Support councils to work in partnership with Papatipu Rūnanga to integrate their requirements into local climate action planning.

	7.1: Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations across all council business including decisions, policies, projects, procurement, and infrastructure development. 10: Assemble and coordinate an implementation team to ensure the successful delivery and implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.
Proceed with amendments (5 sub-actions)	1.2: Update the Canterbury climate change risk and urgency assessment. 4.2c: Investigate the feasibility of establishing blue-green infrastructure on council-owned land, including identifying priority locations for implementation across Canterbury. 5.2: Collaborate with Civil Defence and Emergency Management in Canterbury to produce communications materials that integrate climate action and resilience to natural hazards 9.1: Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan which includes the co-development of climate related indicators appropriate to Canterbury.
Discontinue (3 sub-actions)	4.2a: Maximise opportunities to collaborate with key stakeholders to provide guidance on blue-green infrastructure placement and hazard resilience investment. 4.2b: Collaborate and align with Greater Christchurch Partnership and key stakeholders to deliver a blue-green network. 5.1: Continue to develop the “It’s time, Canterbury” initiative into a comprehensive hub for climate education and collective action across Canterbury 8.1: Advocate to central government for funding to be made available to address the gap between current local government funding and what is needed for the comprehensive local government climate action that is required in the future.

24. Since the CCPP was initiated, it has strengthened relationships across the region, sparked new collaborations, and enabled conversations that may not have occurred otherwise. The plan has created shared foundations, common tools, and priorities that are now supporting more connected, future-focused climate action across Canterbury.
25. In this rapidly changing and fiscally constrained policy environment, strategic and collaborative approaches to climate action will deliver more efficient and equitable outcomes than if councils were acting alone with limited resourcing, uneven capability, and divergent mandates. It is for these reasons that continuing to strategically implement the CCPP is recommended to remain a priority.

26. A Gantt displaying the high-level phasing of all actions is contained in Appendix 2. An additional Gantt displaying the phasing of key actions (actions 1,2,3,4) can be found in Appendix 3.

Dependencies

27. The review identified several dependencies and interrelationships across actions. These linkages are important for implementation, as progress in some areas relies on earlier or parallel delivery across other actions. Recognising these dependencies can help improve sequencing, reduce duplication, and support a more coordinated approach to delivery.
28. The key dependencies are as follows:
- Sub-action 1.2 (Regional Climate Change Risk and Urgency Assessment) is dependent on the completion of Action 1.1 (development of a regional risk visualisation tool), as the latter provides foundational inputs for the analysis needed in the risk assessment.
 - Action 4.2 (Development of the blue-green network plan) is dependent on risk outputs developed by Action 1.1.
 - Action 4.2c (Feasibility assessment of blue-green network infrastructure on council-owned land) is contingent on progress in Action 4.2 and Action 1.1 (Development of a regional risk visualisation tool)
 - Action 6.2 (Support councils to work in partnership with Papatipu Rūnanga to integrate their requirements into local climate action planning) depends on Action 6.1 (Understand the climate action requirements of Papatipu Rūnanga across Canterbury) as councils can only partner effectively with Papatipu Rūnanga and integrate their requirements into climate planning once those requirements are clearly understood.
 - Action 3 (Support adaptation planning) overlaps with Action 6 (Understand the climate action requirements of Papatipu Rūnanga across Canterbury) as some Papatipu Rūnanga requirements are related to adaptation.
 - Action 8.1 (funding and financing) enables the identification of funding options for CCPP actions, primarily for sub-action 2.3, to support identifying funding options to implement the Transition to Low-Emissions Plan. As part of the Strategic Review of the CCPP, it is proposed to close Action 8.1 as a standalone action and instead embed funding and financing into the delivery of the actions.

Budget for Years 3-4

29. Budgets for Years 3 and 4 have been estimated based on the proposed work programme, pending approval of the Strategic Review of the CCPP. The recommended budget for Year 3 is estimated at \$755,206. This is primarily for:
- Action 1: \$300,000 for the development of the risk tool (decision pending)

- Action 2: \$70,600 for the annual LEDP subscription and \$19,000 to complete the transition to a low-emissions plan
 - Actions 3 and 6: \$80,000 for workshops and engagement
 - Action 4: \$200,000 for the development of the Blue-Green Network Plan
 - Action 9: \$20,000 for simplification of the monitoring and reporting framework
 - Action 10: \$65,606.40 for project management.
30. The recommended budget for Year 4 is estimated at \$285,000. This is primarily for:
- Action 1: \$50,000 to address data gaps and complete the development of the risk tool (decision pending)
 - Action 2: \$25,000 to support the launch and implementation of the low-emissions transition plan
 - Action 4: \$100,000 to complete the development of the Blue-Green Network Plan, and \$100,000 for the feasibility assessment of implementing the Blue-Green Network on council land
 - Action 9: \$10,000 to embed climate change outcomes into existing processes. Additional funding may be required, and costs will be estimated in Year 3.

Approach to LTP funding

31. The Strategic Review did not identify specific funding requirements for continuation of actions in Long-Term Plans, as this was outside of scope agreed by the Canterbury Policy Forum. Recommendations for funding requirements will be refined in Year 3.
32. The review did, however, identify which actions are likely to require funding, particularly for ongoing tool licensing and implementations:
- a. Sub-action 1.1: Ongoing costs for the risk tool are estimated at \$230,000 per annum from Year 4 onwards (decision pending).
 - b. Sub-action 1.2: Costs to update the Canterbury climate change risk and urgency assessment need to be estimated, and commencement is dependent on a decision regarding the risk tool.
 - c. Sub-action 2.1: Ongoing costs for the Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) from Year 4 onwards to be confirmed on Year 3 (decision pending).
 - d. Sub-action 2.3: Implementation costs for the actions within the Transition to Low-Emissions Plan from Year 4 onwards will be estimated in year 3.
 - e. Action 4: Implementation costs for the Blue-Green Network Plan from Year 4 onwards will be estimated on year 3 as part of the feasibility assessment.
33. Detailed funding requirements and options will be identified and discussed at the CCWG meeting in August.

Risks and Limitations of the Review

34. The review was undertaken within compressed timeframes and in a context of ongoing policy uncertainty. As a result, some conclusions are based on assumptions regarding the direction and timing of national reforms.
35. Other limitations included variable staff capacity across councils and the need to minimise stakeholder burden. These were managed through a tightly scoped approach, targeted engagement, and clear documentation of assumptions and uncertainties.

Next Steps

36. Following consideration by the Canterbury Policy Forum, the recommendations from the Strategic Review (Appendix 1) will be refined as required and progressed to the Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums for endorsement.
37. Subject to approval, the revised approach to Year 3 delivery will be implemented from 1 July 2026.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1** – Summary of recommendations (attached to the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum paper as Attachment 2)
- **Appendix 2** - GANTT – All actions
- **Appendix 3** - GANTT – Key actions

Appendix 1 - Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Strategic Review – Summary of Recommendations

This appendix:

- summarise findings of the strategic review for each live CCPP action
- records current status, strategic rationale, budget/resourcing implications, and decision sought
- supports the recommendations set out in the main Strategic Review report and decision paper
- recommends that **Actions 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1 and 10 proceed as planned**
- recommends that **Actions 1.2, 4.2c, 5.2 and 9.1 proceed with amendments to scope or timeframes**
- recommends that **Actions 4.2a, 4.2b, 5.1 and 8 are closed**

Action	Status	Why it matters/strategic rationale	Budget / Resourcing	Recommendation
Proceed with action delivery as planned				
1.1 Develop a Canterbury-wide climate and natural hazard risks tool.	Action 1.1 is on track. The regional Data Sufficiency Review is underway with Urban Intelligence and is due on 30 June 2026. The next phase is to develop a business case for a regional tool, informed by the Data Sufficiency Review and further engagement with councils and key stakeholders, to support options and advice to CEs and Mayors	The proposed regional risk tool aligns strongly with spatial planning, local adaptation planning, emergency management, and council asset management, creating clear regional value. Having one tool that supports multiple different functions will reduce duplication between councils, as well as support smaller councils with less ability to procure a similarly powerful tool on their own. The tool would also support the standardised, risk-based approaches to new developments required by the NPS-Natural Hazards, further increasing its relevance to the new planning system.	Led by Selwyn District Council Resource: Maintain current in-kind staff and seek additional in-kind council staff time during development phase of tool, subject to a decision to proceed. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$300,000 Year 4 (FY 27/28) and onwards: No current budget allocation. Funding for ongoing annual licensing of a tool would be required through Long Term Plans.	Proceed with Action 1.1 as planned.
1.2 Update the Canterbury	Action 1.2 is not yet started. Action 1.2 is dependent on the completion of sub-	An updated Canterbury Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCCRA) based on the risk tool	Led by Canterbury Regional Council	Proceed with amendment to

climate change risk and urgency assessment.	action 1.1. Originally this action was scheduled for Year 4; however, it may need to be brought forward into the latter half of year 3 to align with regional spatial planning timeframes if required.	procured in Action 1.1 will support regional planning, adaptation planning, emergency and asset management workstreams to understand what communities, assets, and other values are at risk in a changing climate. It will expand on the qualitative understanding from the 2022 Canterbury Climate Change Risk Assessment with added value through quantitative and spatial understanding for an integrated view of climate risk in Canterbury, which will enable more targeted and impactful interventions. Decision makers are being asked to endorse a later scoping exercise.	Resource: No current resource allocation. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): No current budget allocation. Funding to complete the work may be required through Long Term Plans.	action 1.2 subject to further advice on the scope, approach, timeframes and budget following governance decisions on regional tool development.
2.1 Collate data and develop models to prepare greenhouse gas emissions inventories and identify emissions reduction pathways for Canterbury to support New Zealand's national greenhouse gas commitments.	Action 2.1 is on track. Canterbury councils' district greenhouse gas emissions inventories are in development and due in July 2026. Recommendations on the annual subscription to the Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) tool will be brought to the Canterbury Policy Forum in June 2026.	This action enables Canterbury councils to coordinate collectively on emissions reduction, supporting shared evidence base and avoiding duplication. The action ensures regional emissions data is improved and can be monitored over time and policy interventions can be targeted accordingly. Participation in the LEDP tool has achieved nation-wide collaboration on improvements for emissions data, inventory methodologies, and decarbonisation pathways modelling, but is an ongoing process.	Led by Canterbury Regional Council Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resource comprising Action lead and sub-group members. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$70,600 (For LEDP annual subscription – decision pending). Year 4 (FY 27/28) and onwards: Funding for the ongoing subscription to the tool beyond year 3 (if approved by the Canterbury Policy Forum in June 2026) will be required through Long Term Plans. Annual cost to be confirmed.	Proceed with Action 2.1 as planned.
2.3 Work with partners, communities, and key stakeholders	Action 2.3 is on track.	Although national policy signals have softened the national approach to emissions reduction in recent years, a transition plan remains crucial for the long-term resilience of	Led by Canterbury Regional Council	Proceed with Action 2.3 as planned.

to build a regional low-emissions transition plan that supports equitable, inclusive local pathways to a thriving, climate-resilient region meeting emissions reduction targets.	The Strategic Framework for the low-emissions transition plan has been completed, and draft emissions reductions initiatives are in development.	Canterbury. Mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation are intrinsically linked. Reducing emissions addresses the root cause of exacerbating climate risks - such as severe weather and increased flooding - for future generations. A joined-up approach to emissions reduction in the region will have strong risk-reduction co-benefits that directly align with councils' core services.	Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resource comprising Action lead and sub-group members. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$19,000 (contractually committed to BECA for development of the plan). Year 4 (FY 27/28) and onwards: \$25,000 (To support the launch of the transition plan and implementation of the actions, including engagement). Funding required for implementation of transition actions through Long Term Plans.	
3.1 Develop and implement a best practice approach for councils in Canterbury to work effectively and efficiently together with communities on adaptation planning and implementation.	Action 3.1 is progressing as planned, albeit more slowly than anticipated. Action 3 aims to provide practical support to enable Canterbury councils to carry out effective climate adaptation planning and implementation with mana whenua and local communities, taking a Treaty-based approach. Part of this work involves improving councils' understanding of what is important to Papatipu Rūnanga, and how we can best support Papatipu Rūnanga with their own climate actions. The completion of Phase 1 (situational analysis of regional Adaptation planning) is pending testing and refinement of the analysis and recommendations for Phase 2. Input from Papatipu Rūnanga will be ideal to complete Phase 1. The engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga will be approached in alignment with the delivery of Action 6.	Continuing with this action will enable or help support councils to carry out climate adaptation planning, including the identification of priority areas, hazards and risks, which can then inform the development of the statutorily required regional spatial plan and local adaptation plans. However, it is recommended that the primary and sub-action be reworded to move away from developing a 'best-practice approach' and to broaden the scope to enabling councils to undertake local adaptation planning through a Treaty-based approach, ensuring a more relational approach with communities: Amended Primary action 3 wording: <i>Support local adaptation planning with communities taking a Treaty-based approach.</i>	Led by Hurunui District Council Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resource at a minimum. Delivery would be improved with additional staff resource and a wider scope of expertise on the sub-working group. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$30,000 (To support engagement and workshops). Year 4 (FY 27/28) and onwards: Funding	Proceed with Action 3.1 as planned with minor amendment to primary and sub-action wording.

	It should be noted that the development of a hazard risk tool (Action 1) will greatly assist in the delivery of the objective of this action.	<i>Amended Sub-action 3.1 wording: Enable councils in Canterbury to work effectively and efficiently together with communities on adaptation planning and implementation.</i>	requirements to be determined pending recommendations of Phase 1.	
4.2 Develop a blue-green network plan for Canterbury and accompanying guidance to support locally-led implementation	Action 4.2 is on track. The Blue-Green Network (BGN) literature review and inventory are complete. Boffa Miskell has been engaged to scope the development of the BGN plan by 30 June 2026 to inform procurement. This work will outline a delivery roadmap, and help us better understand resourcing, timeframes and costs associated with plan development. The plan is due for completion in Year 4, as originally indicated in the CCPP.	Developing a blue-green network plan aligns closely with existing and upcoming core service provision e.g. statutorily required regional spatial planning, flood resilience works, and implementation of the 2025 Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy. Continuing with this CCPP action therefore aligns strongly with related work already underway and will further support risk reduction, adaptation, and mitigation through the identification of areas appropriate for blue-green infrastructure, while also reflecting the intent of the National Adaptation Framework, the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards, and emergency management priorities. To streamline reporting, the wording of Action 4.2 should be revised to embed the proposed changes to Action 4.2a and b so that these actions are inherent to delivery of Action 4.2 rather than separating them into a sub-action. For example, <i>"Collaborate with key stakeholders, including the Greater Christchurch Partnership, to develop an aligned blue-green network plan for Canterbury and accompanying guidance to support locally led implementation."</i>	Led by Waimakariri District Council Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resource comprising Action lead and sub-group members. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$300,000 (for development of the plan. It is anticipated that part of the development costs will be sequenced to Year 4). Year 4 (FY 27/28) and onwards: Funding required for implementation of the BGN plan through Long Term Plans.	Proceed with Action 4. 2 as planned, with amendments to action wording.
4.2a Maximise opportunities to collaborate with key stakeholders to provide guidance on blue-green infrastructure	Action 4.2 is on track. Progressing as required as part of the delivery of sub-action 4.2. No upcoming deliverables.	This sub-action was specifically included in the CCPP to support the Nature Code MBIE Endeavour Research Proposal. The funding bid for this proposal was unsuccessful and other opportunities to collaborate with key stakeholders are being explored as part of the delivery of Action 4.2.	Led by Waimakariri District Council Resource: Included in resourcing of Action 4.2	Discontinue Action 4.2a as this is progressing as required in the delivery of Action 4.2.

placement and hazard resilience investment.				
4.2b Collaborate and align with Greater Christchurch Partnership and key stakeholders to deliver a blue-green network.	Action 4.2 is on track. Progressing as part of the delivery of sub-action 4.2. No upcoming deliverables.	Collaboration with key stakeholders and alignment with the Greater Christchurch Partnership are integral to delivering Action 4.2.	Led by Waimakariri District Council Resource: Included in resourcing of Action 4.2	Discontinue Action 4.2b as this is progressing as required in the delivery of Action 4.2.
4.2c Investigate the feasibility of establishing blue-green infrastructure on council-owned land, including identifying priority locations for implementation across Canterbury.	Action 4.2 is not yet started – planned for year 4. This work depends on the completion of Action 4.2 and is likely to take place in Year 4.	Much of the investigative work will be done for this action as part of the development of the BGN Plan, however, there is a need to extend the delivery date to 30 June 2028 to allow a final implementation report to be prepared.	Led by Waimakariri District Council Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): No funding required. Work proposed for Year 4, after the BGN plan is completed. Year 4 (FY 27/28): \$100,000 (For feasibility assessment).	Proceed with amendment to Action 4.2c subject to further advice on scope, approach, timeframes and budget following completion of Action 4.2 Blue-Green Network Plan.
5.1 Continue to develop the “It’s Time, Canterbury” initiative into a comprehensive hub for climate education and collective action across Canterbury	Action 5.1 is delayed. Prior to developing the It’s time, Canterbury (ITC) initiative into a comprehensive hub for climate education, a review of the platform was procured by Canterbury Regional Council to assess whether the regional climate communication platform is still fit for purpose and relevant and to recommend its future direction.	The external review of the It’s time, Canterbury platform found there was strong support for regional collaboration in principle. However, ITC struggles to be successful due to unclear purpose and objectives, leading to lack of prioritisation and resourcing within Territorial Authorities (TAs). TAs also said the generic messaging doesn’t reflect current local action.	Led by Canterbury Regional Council Budget: Funded by Environment Canterbury not the CCPP.	Agree to the disestablishment of the It’s Time, Canterbury platform and the closure of sub-action 5.1.

		Concurrently, climate communications have shifted toward local, action-focused adaptation and many councils indicated ITC is a low priority for them, and its absence would have little impact. The report recommended that either ITC is reset with clear purpose, ownership and focus on regional progress or it is discontinued as a standalone platform and that climate action messaging is delivered through other coordinated channels. Staff recommend that the ITC platform be disestablished, and that current Environment Canterbury resources be focused on regional climate messaging, while district councils continue to develop their local climate messaging.		
5.2 Collaborate with Civil Defence and Emergency Management in Canterbury to produce communications materials that integrate climate action and resilience to natural hazards	Action 5.2 is delayed. Conversations have recently been held with Civil Defence and Emergency Management Community Resilience Advisor to discuss CCPP action 5.2 and opportunities for collaboration.	The agreed way forward is for the Canterbury Climate Change Working Group and Environment Canterbury's Climate Change & Community Resilience Team to collaborate with the CDEM Community Resilience Advisor to scope and develop a practical, ready-to-use engagement toolkit for district Emergency Management Officers. This should provide consistent, climate-informed messaging to support disaster reduction, readiness, response and recovery in the context of increasing climate and natural hazard risks. Agreement has been reached with CDEM to scope the approach in 2026 and work together to develop content for campaign/toolkit delivery in 2027, using in-kind staff time in the first instance. This reflects the findings from the external review of It's time, Canterbury that regional communications work is most effective when it is practical, clearly owned, collaborative, and	Led by Canterbury Regional Council/Civil Defence and Emergency	Proceed with Action 5.2 with a change to timeframes.

		focused on simple, action-oriented messaging that complements locally tailored communications rather than duplicating them.		
6.1 Understand the climate action requirements of Papatipu Rūnanga across Canterbury.	Action 6.1 is progressing slowly. A gap analysis was completed and initial engagement between the CMF Secretariat and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu has begun to determine which pathway is best to follow to engage with rūnanga.	Since the gap analysis has been completed, it is clearer how different councils understand the climate action requirements of Papatipu Rūnanga. This will, in turn, feed into the success of action 6.2. Working in genuine partnership will require ongoing conversations and transparency and will benefit all actions in the CCPP.	Led by all councils and Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resource. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$50,000 (To support engagement and workshops).	Proceed with Action 6.1 as planned.
6.2 Support councils to work in partnership with Papatipu Rūnanga to integrate their requirements into local climate action planning.	Action 6.2 is not yet started. Links closely to Action 3 and 6.1.	This action has pivoted to more closely align with action 3: adaptation planning. It is understood that climate impacts affect Māori communities more acutely. Continuing with this action shows a commitment to genuine partnership with Papatipu Rūnanga and upholding te Tiriti o Waitangi through shared action. This action additionally connects strongly to the collaborative ethos of the CCPP, the plan's Treaty-based principle and the cost/benefits of shared climate action.	Led by all councils and Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resource. Budget: No budget identified	Proceed with Action 6.2 as planned.
7.1 Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations across all council business including decisions, policies, projects, procurement, and infrastructure development.	Action 7.1 is on track. Progress with this action has been constrained by staff capacity.	The original rationale for this action remains strong. It does not require funding, instead relying on staff resourcing. The action sub-group is set to meet soon to identify how to expedite priority actions, including integrating climate change into long-term plan and decision-making processes.	Led by Ashburton District Council Resource: Keep current in-kind staff and seek additional in-kind staff to support delivery.	Proceed with Action 7.1 as planned.

8.1 Advocate to central government for funding to be made available to address the gap between current local government funding and what is needed for the comprehensive local government climate action that is required in the future.	Action 8.1 is at risk. Funding and financing options have been identified and compiled into a database that has been shared across the region. Gaps in funding and financing have been identified. Resourcing needs of councils has been assessed via survey and projects needing additional financial support have been identified. Opportunities to advocate to central government for funding to be made available have been limited.	As councils experience rates capping, constrained capacity and other fiscal pressures this action remains important but is unlikely to be most effective as a standalone advocacy workstream. The strategic review of this action indicates that greater value may lie in identifying funding and financing options to support the delivery of CCPP actions. This would enable the progression of specific projects, business cases, and co-funding opportunities, while continuing targeted advocacy through existing regional channels, such as the wider CCWG work programme.	Led by Christchurch City Council Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resources to support action leads in identifying funding and financing opportunities for individual actions.	Close Action 8.1 and agree to maintain the funding and financing advisory support function.
9.1 Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan which includes the co-development of climate related indicators appropriate to Canterbury.	Action 9.1 is paused. A CCPP monitoring and evaluation plan was developed in 2025, however, implementation has been constrained by limited staff capacity, and staff resourcing prioritised toward CCPP action delivery rather than monitoring and evaluation. Indicator review expected in line with the CCPP review in August 2026.	Monitoring and evaluation of the CCPP actions is important to support accountability, learning, and understanding of whether the partnership is delivering meaningful outcomes over time. As an immediate next step, baseline data should be collated and an annual report produced at the end of FY 2026/27 to provide an initial picture of progress and help inform future prioritisation. However, the strategic review also highlights uncertainty about how long-term monitoring and evaluation will be sustained in the context of changing local government structures, so the focus at this stage should be on establishing a practical and proportionate foundation that can be adapted as institutional arrangements evolve.	Led by Canterbury Regional Council Resource: In kind staff resource. Budget: Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$20,000 (to establish baseline monitoring data and metrics). Year 4 (FY 27/28): \$10,000 (for embedding climate outcomes into existing processes). Additional funding may be required to complete this work through Long Term Plans.	Proceed with Action 9.1 with changes to scope and timeframes.
10 Assemble and coordinate an implementation team to ensure the successful delivery and implementation of	Action 10 is on track. Implementation is achieved predominantly through in-kind staff resourcing across councils and consists of: • Implementation Manager • Project Manager • Action Leads	Action 10 is critical to the implementation of the CCPP. The cross-council implementation team and CCWG continue to work well together, with staff remaining committed, engaged, and supportive of the partnership while also	Led by Canterbury Regional Council Resource: Keep current in-kind staff resource. Budget:	Proceed with Action 10 as planned.

the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.	- Sub-groups - Canterbury Climate Change Working Group (CCWG)	delivering their own council mahi. However, delivery relies heavily on in-kind staff time across councils, with only the project manager position funded through the CCPP budget, which creates pressure on already stretched teams. This is particularly evident in South Canterbury, where limited staff capacity has constrained participation, and ongoing input from Waitaki, Waimate and Mackenzie has been very limited, meaning other councils are carrying a disproportionate share of implementation. In practice, Canterbury Regional Council is currently providing the lion's share of implementation support, including the Implementation Manager, CCWG secretariat function and several action leads.	Year 3 (FY 26/27): \$65,606.40 (For project manager salary) For project management support beyond Year 3, additional funding would need to be sought through Long Term Plans.	
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Previously completed/closed actions

2.2 Based on the emissions reduction pathways identified for Canterbury, undertake a regional transition risk and opportunities assessment, considering social, cultural, environmental, and economic impacts, to inform an equitable and inclusive transition to a low-emissions region (Completed)

4.1 Develop a Canterbury wide natural ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment (Completed)

8.2 Explore the feasibility of a Canterbury Climate Commitment that inspires and unites businesses and communities to accelerate climate action (Discontinued)

CCPP Phases & Deliverables

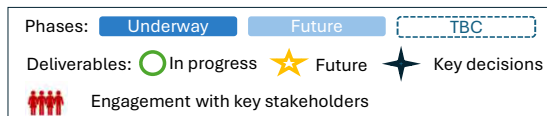
NB: The phases and deliverables of key actions are pending approval from the Strategic Review of the CCPP for Year 3 (FY26/27) and Year 4 (FY27/28).

Phases:	Underway	Future	TBC
★	Key deliverables	👥	Engagement with key stakeholders

Actions	Key Deliverables	FY 25/26 (Y2)	FY 26/27 (Y3)	FY 27/28 (Y4)
Action 1 <i>Understanding Climate Risks and Improving Resilience</i>	- Regional risk tool go-Live – Jun. 2027 - Updated Risk and Urgency assessment - TBC	Data sufficiency review	Develop risk tool ★	Update the Canterbury climate change risk and urgency assessment ★
Action 2 <i>Emissions reduction</i>	- Regional emissions inventory completed by LEDP – Jun. 2026 - Final transition to low emissions plan – Jun. 2027	LEDP Trial (Emissions report) ★	Develop transition to low emissions initiatives and plan ★	Support implementation of the transition to low emissions plan
Action 3 <i>Adaptation planning</i>	Situational analysis report and recommendations for the next phase to: CPF – 18 Sep. 2026	Situational analysis of adaptation planning ★	Work TBC	
Action 4 <i>Nature based solutions</i>	- BGN Plan and Implementation guidance – Early 2028 - Feasibility report – Jun. 2028	Develop scope for BGN plan	Develop BGN Plan and Implementation guidance ★	BGN feasibility assessment ★
Action 5 <i>Climate change education and advocacy</i>	Toolkit for district Emergency Mgmt. Officers – TBC 2027	Close sub-action 5.1	Develop toolkit for district Emergency Management Officers ★	
Action 6 <i>Support Papatipu Rūnanga</i>	Papatipu Rūnanga requirements – TBC	Workshops with Runanga		
Action 7 <i>Council processes</i>	- LTP practices webinar – TBC - Supporting material delivered to councils – TBC 2027	LTP practices webinar ★	Develop supporting material to councils ★	
Action 8 <i>Funding & Finance</i>		Close sub-action 8.1		
Action 9 <i>Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)</i>	- Year 3 report – Aug. 2027 - Year 4 report – Aug. 2028		Collect baseline data and simplify M&E framework	Develop report up to Year 3 ★
Action 10 <i>CCPP Programme Implementation</i>	CCPP Review recommendations to CMF – 28 Aug. 2026	CCPP Review ★		Embed climate outcomes reporting ★
				Develop report up to Year 4 ★

CCPP Phases & Deliverables of Key Actions

NB: The phases and deliverables of key actions are pending approval from the Strategic Review of the CCPP for Year 3 (FY26/27) and Year 4 (FY27/28).



Key Actions	Deliverables Summary	FY 25/26 (Y2)	FY 26/27 (Y3)	FY 27/28 (Y4)
Action 1 <i>Understanding Climate Risks and Improving Resilience</i>	In progress - Regional Data Sufficiency Review completed – 30 Jun. 2026 - CMF decision on the tool development – 28 Aug. 2026 Future - Regional risk tool go-Live – Jun. 2027 - Updated Risk and Urgency assessment - TBC	Review completed Data sufficiency review	Decision on the development of risk tool Develop risk tool	Regional risk tool: Go-Live Updated Risk and Urgency assessment
Action 2 <i>Emissions reduction</i>	In progress - CPF decision on LEDP for Year 3 – 19 Jun. 2026 - Regional emissions inventory completed by LEDP – Jun. 2026 - End of LEDP trial – Oct. 2026 - Draft transition to low emissions initiatives – Dec. 2026 Future - Final transition to low emissions plan – Jun. 2027	Decision on LEDP for Y3 LEDP Trial	Regional emissions inventory completed by LEDP Develop transition to low emissions initiatives and plan	Draft transition to low emissions initiatives Support implementation of the transition to low emissions plan
Action 3 <i>Adaptation planning</i>	In progress - Situational analysis report and recommendations for the next phase to: CPF – 18 Sep.; CEF – 19 Oct. and CMF – 20 Nov. 2026 Future - TBC	Situational analysis of adaptation planning	Report and recommendations Work TBC	
Action 4 <i>Nature based solutions</i>	In progress - Scoping of the Blue-Green Network (BGN) Plan completed – 30 Jun. 2026 - CMF decision on the procurement approach for the BGN Plan – 28 Aug. 2026 Future - BGN Plan and Implementation guidance – Early 2028 - Feasibility report – Jun. 2028	Scope completed Develop scope for BGN plan	Decision on the procurement approach Develop BGN Plan and Implementation guidance	BGN Plan and Guidance BGN feasibility assessment

Attachment: Draft Actions for the Canterbury Transition to Low-Emissions Plan

This attachment presents a draft set of regional actions to support Canterbury's transition to a low-emissions future. The actions are grouped by core council functions and are intended to identify where councils can lead, enable, partner or advocate for emissions reduction across the region. They do not represent all emissions-reduction activity across the region but identify practical areas where council action can add value.

Governance, advocacy & regional partnership

Regional leadership, collective advocacy, partnership brokering, and shared capability across councils.

1.1 Advocate for central government policy, regulation and funding to enable a rapid and inclusive low emissions transition.

1.2 Enable local bioenergy supply chains and biomass uptake for industry.

Planning, regulation & consenting

Embedding low-emissions outcomes in planning, investment frameworks, regulatory tools, and consenting pathways.

2.1 Integrate nature-based solutions into investment frameworks and planning strategies.

2.2 Enable renewable energy infrastructure through regional spatial and district planning.

2.3 Enable low-emissions mobility through integrated spatial and transport planning.

2.4 Explore regulatory levers and pricing mechanisms to enable low-emission mobility.

Infrastructure, assets & council operations

Planning, investing in and operating council assets, infrastructure, and services to reduce emissions and improve resilience.

3.1 Embed energy transition, fuel resilience and renewable energy opportunities into council asset planning and operations, with a focus on water, wastewater, solid waste and council-owned buildings

Waste, procurement & circular economy

Using waste planning, service design, procurement, industry partnerships, and circular economy initiatives to reduce landfill emissions and keep materials in use.

4.1 Promote existing reuse and recycling services in Canterbury.

4.2 Partner with industry to avoid, reuse and recycle construction and demolition materials.

4.3 Encourage the reduction, reuse, and recovery of organic waste in Canterbury.

Community, business & behaviour change

Supporting households, businesses, sectors and communities to understand options and take practical action.

5.1 Support farmers to understand and reduce on-farm emissions.

5.2 Support the decarbonisation of high-energy users in the region.

5.3 Work with partners to encourage, fund and finance Canterbury households, businesses, and communities to adopt clean, affordable and resilient energy solutions.

Data, monitoring & evidence

Enhance regional emissions data, monitoring, reporting and capability across councils to track progress, inform decisions, and strengthen regional accountability.

6.1 Build greenhouse gas emission literacy, monitoring and planning capabilities across Canterbury councils.

5.4 Promote existing information, funding and financing options for low-emissions mobility.

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Governance, advocacy & regional partnership

Regional leadership, collective advocacy, partnership brokering, and shared capability across councils.

This function brings together actions that use the Mayoral Forum's collective voice, regional partnerships, and shared capability to enable Canterbury's low-emissions transition.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
1.1 Advocate for central government policy, regulation, and funding to enable a rapid and inclusive low-emissions transition	Collective advocacy to strengthen ETS incentives for indigenous planting, funding energy decarbonisation and bioenergy supply chains, removing regulatory barriers to good emissions reduction farming practices (e.g. methane inhibition technology, farm forestry, solar irrigation) and enabling low-emissions mobility (e.g. funding for vehicle decarbonisation, EV charging infrastructure, mass rapid transport).	The Mayoral Forum provides councils with a powerful collective advocacy platform to call for Government support necessary to enable and accelerate Canterbury's low-emissions transition.	Short (1–3 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> Canterbury Mayoral Forum	<u>Funding status:</u> Funded	Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Mayoral Forum Regional Energy Action Plan Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan
1.2 Enable local bioenergy supply chains and biomass uptake for industry	Partner with Regional Economic Development agencies and key industry actors to scope regional biomass and biofuel potential and facilitate second-generation biofuel supply. This may include mapping feedstocks and demand, assessing technologies and logistics, brokering partnerships, developing business cases, and supporting pilots.	Developing local bioenergy and biofuel supply chains strengthens economic resilience and industry transition, reduces emissions, and reinforces Canterbury's sustainable, forward-looking identity grounded in environmental stewardship and community wellbeing.	Long (10–30 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> TBC <u>Potential key partners:</u> MBIE EECA Regional Development Agencies Christchurch Airport Port of Lyttelton Fuel suppliers Waste sector High emissions industries	<u>Funding status:</u> Unfunded <u>Potential funding opportunities:</u> Industry investment, Central government programmes, Regional development agencies, EECA	Mayoral Forum Regional Energy Action Plan

Planning, regulation & consenting

Embedding low-emissions outcomes in planning, investment frameworks, regulatory tools, and consenting pathways.

This function groups actions where councils can shape land use, infrastructure, transport, and regulatory settings to enable emissions reduction.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
2.1 Integrate nature-based solutions into investment frameworks and planning strategies	Incorporating nature-based solutions as alternatives to grey infrastructure where appropriate, with priority applications in urban waterways and drainage, streets and public open spaces, foreshores, estuaries, riverbanks, and marginal farmland.	Nature-based solutions can replace or supplement traditional grey infrastructure, displacing emissions-intensive concrete and steel, sequestering carbon, reducing operating expenditure, and creating biodiversity and recreational benefits.	Short (1–3 years) to medium (5–10 years) to Long (10–30 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> All Canterbury councils	<u>Funding status:</u> Partially funded through existing council work programmes	2025 Waitaha Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Action 4: Blue-Green Network Plan 30 Year Infrastructure Strategies
2.2 Enable renewable energy infrastructure through regional spatial and district planning	Work with partners to assess renewable infrastructure needs and integrate them into regional spatial and district planning processes.	Enabling renewable energy infrastructure is essential to maintaining the pace needed for electrification and emissions reduction, while providing certainty to industry and building our renewable energy capacity.	Short (1–3 years) to medium (5–10 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> Regional Council <u>Potential key partners:</u> City and district councils, Electricity Distribution Businesses, Gentailers	<u>Funding status:</u> Partially funded under Regional Spatial Planning	Mayoral Forum Regional Energy Action Plan Regional Spatial Planning District Planning
2.3 Enable low-emissions mobility through integrated spatial and transport planning	Embed low-emissions mobility outcomes into regional spatial planning, district planning, and transport planning so communities are designed around shorter trips, connected centres, safe walking and cycling networks, public transport access, freight efficiency, and future charging and mobility infrastructure.	Urban form strongly influences travel choices. Planning for compact, well-connected communities enables more people and goods to move by low-emissions modes, reduces reliance on private fossil-fuel vehicles, and supports the effectiveness of vehicle electrification, public transport, active transport and freight initiatives.	Short (1–3 years) to medium (5–10 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> All Canterbury councils <u>Potential key partners:</u> Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, public transport operators, community groups, business associations	<u>Funding status:</u> Partially funded through existing spatial, transport and district planning	Regional Land Transport Plan Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan District plans and growth strategies
2.4 Explore regulatory levers and pricing mechanisms to	Explore regulatory and pricing mechanisms (e.g., differentiated parking fees, congestion charges, low-cost public transport) to	Regulatory levers and pricing mechanisms can drive behaviour change while generating funding for	Medium (5–10 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> Regional Council	<u>Funding status:</u> Unfunded	Regional Land Transport Plan

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
enable low-emission mobility	encourage zero-emission vehicle use and influence travel behaviour, with a strong equity focus.	alternative transport options, supporting active transport infrastructure, public transport services, and EV and micromobility uptake.				

Infrastructure, assets & council operations

Planning, investing in and operating council assets, infrastructure, and services to reduce emissions and improve resilience.

This function focuses on opportunities in council buildings, water, wastewater, waste assets, and operational asset management.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
3.1 Embed energy transition, fuel resilience and renewable energy opportunities into council asset planning and operations, with a focus on water, wastewater, solid waste and council-owned buildings	Embed energy transition and fuel resilience into council asset management, planning and renewal programmes, with a focus on emissions-intensive water, wastewater and solid waste assets and council-owned buildings. This would involve conducting energy audits to identify efficiency and cost-saving opportunities, and integrating interventions such as LED lighting, smart building management systems, rooftop solar, battery storage, biogas capture and reuse, energy optimisation and boiler electrification into Water and Wastewater Masterplans, Asset Management Plans and relevant infrastructure and building upgrade programmes.	Embedding energy transition and resilience considerations into asset planning supports better investment decisions by reducing emissions, operating costs and asset downtime.	Medium (5–10 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> All Canterbury councils	<u>Funding status:</u> Partially funded through councils' existing asset management.	Council Asset Management Plans Council controlled organisations

Waste, procurement & circular economy

Using waste planning, service design, procurement, industry partnerships, and circular economy initiatives to reduce landfill emissions and keep materials in use.

This function groups actions focused on reuse, recycling, construction and demolition materials, organics, and waste-related emissions reduction.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
4.1 Promote existing reuse and recycling services in Canterbury	Promote reuse, repair and second-hand options to residential and commercial audiences, and connect businesses with reuse services, keeping goods in circulation longer and reducing demand for new products.	Making reuse and repair more accessible reduces demand for new goods, cuts waste, saves money, supports our local economy, and reduces emissions.	Short (1–3 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> City and District Councils	<u>Funding status:</u> Funded under Councils' current Waste Management and Minimisation Plans	City / District Councils Waste Management and Minimisation Plans Canterbury Waste Joint Committee
4.2 Partner with industry to avoid, reuse and recycle construction and demolition materials	Deliver targeted campaigns promoting reuse of construction and demolition materials, investigate waste bylaws to support source separation, and lift consistency of approach across all Canterbury councils.	Construction and demolition activities are a significant source of waste. Reusing construction materials reduces demand for new materials and diverts waste from cleanfill and landfill.	Short (1–3 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> City and District Councils	<u>Funding status:</u> Funded under Councils' current Waste Management and Minimisation Plans	City / District Councils Waste Management and Minimisation Plans Canterbury Waste Joint Committee
4.3 Encourage the reduction, reuse and recovery of organic waste in Canterbury	Deliver targeted campaigns for small-to-medium sized businesses promoting organic waste diversion and explore waste bylaws requiring separation at the source. Work with food rescue and reuse services to capture smaller organics streams for human and animal consumption, reducing landfill emissions.	Diverting organic waste from landfill reduces methane generation in landfills and increases the viability for businesses turning waste into products such as biogas, fertiliser or animal feed.	Short (1–3 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> City and District Councils	<u>Funding status:</u> Funded under Councils' current Waste Management and Minimisation Plans	City / District Councils Waste Management and Minimisation Plans Canterbury Waste Joint Committee

Community, business & behaviour change

Supporting households, businesses, sectors and communities to understand options and take practical action.

This function brings together actions focused on advice, outreach, funding pathways, partnerships and behaviour change across farms, industry, households and transport users.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
5.1 Support farmers to understand and reduce on-farm emissions	Build the capability of Canterbury's farming community and catchment groups to understand, measure and reduce on-farm GHG emissions and costs through: - Assessing regulatory barriers to good greenhouse gas emissions reduction practice. - Supporting farmers to understand their emissions profile. - Working with farmers on on-farm improvements and sequestration opportunities. - Promoting good management practices through rural professional partnerships, i.e., animal efficiency, stocking rates, pasture management, low-tillage and regenerative farming practices, electrifying farming equipment.	Farmers in Canterbury are globally competitive on emissions, and ongoing support will enhance this advantage by reducing on-farm costs and promoting further emissions cuts. Additional benefits include better energy efficiency, enhanced biodiversity, and healthier water and soil.	Short (1–3 years) to medium (5–10 years) to Long (10–30 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> Regional Council <u>Potential key partners:</u> Agricultural sector bodies, research institutions, MPI	<u>Funding status:</u> Partially funded (partially underway through Canterbury Regional Council Farm Environment Plan Audit Programme)	Farm Environment Plan Audit Programme 2025 Waitaha Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy
5.2 Support the decarbonisation of high-energy users in the region.	Understand the region's highest-emitting, highest-energy industries and identify decarbonisation pathways by investigating regulatory barriers and opportunities (e.g. good management practices) and connecting businesses with funding opportunities and practical guidance.	Supporting high-energy industries through their energy transition targets our biggest emitters and protects Canterbury's economic base while improving business profitability and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.	Medium (5–10 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> Regional Council <u>Potential key partners:</u> EECA, Christchurch NZ,	<u>Funding status:</u> Unfunded	Regional Energy Transition Accelerator Mayoral Forum Regional Energy Action Plan

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
				Economic Development Agencies, high emissions industries in the region		
5.3 Work with partners to encourage, fund and finance Canterbury households, businesses, and communities to adopt clean, affordable and resilient energy solutions.	Promote energy transition funding for households and businesses (e.g. rooftop solar). Investigate the regional application of the Ratepayer Assistance Scheme for clean energy transition and embed funding information into existing council touchpoints.	Improving awareness of existing funding opportunities can support commercial and residential uptake of renewable energy solutions such as solar and batteries, reduce upfront cost barriers, and accelerate household and business participation in the energy transition.	Short (1–3 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> All Canterbury councils <u>Potential key partners:</u> EECA, LGFA/LGNZ, Green Loans, Energy Retailers, Rewiring Aotearoa	<u>Funding status:</u> Unfunded	Mayoral Forum Regional Energy Action Plan Switch on solar (EECA) Ratepayer Assistance Scheme
5.4 Promote existing information, funding, and financing options to enable low-emission mobility.	Centralise and promote information on low-emission mobility options, along with available funding and financing support. This includes electric vehicles (light and heavy), micromobility (e-bikes, scooters), shared mobility services, EV charging availability, driving behaviour, carpooling, and vehicle maintenance.	Helping residents, businesses, and industries find information and funding opportunities can help drive the electrification of the regional fleet, one of the largest GHG-reduction opportunities in the region.	Short (1–3 years)	<u>Key lead:</u> TBC <u>Potential key partners:</u> Finance providers Industry bodies Fleet managers	<u>Funding status:</u> Unfunded	Travel Demand Management Programme Land Transport Management Regional Land Transport Plan

Data, monitoring & evidence

Enhancing regional emissions data, monitoring, reporting and capability across councils to track progress, inform decisions and strengthen regional accountability.

This function captures actions that build shared evidence, capability and monitoring systems.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Timeframe	Lead & Partners	Funding	Linkages / alignment
6.1 Build greenhouse gas emission literacy, monitoring and planning capabilities across Canterbury councils.	Develop shared tools, capability-building opportunities and consistent approaches to monitoring regional emissions and progress across councils.	Consistent data, shared capability and common monitoring approaches help councils track progress, make evidence-based decisions and communicate regional progress clearly.	Short (1–3 years) / ongoing	<u>Key lead:</u> All Canterbury councils	<u>Funding status:</u> Funded through Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan and councils' Climate Change Working Group participation	Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan

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Procurement scope for sub-action 4.2: a regional blue-green network plan

Note: scope based on Option C budget of \$270,000

A summary of the scope for procurement is set out below.

The project

The project will see a Blue Green Network Plan (BGN Plan) developed for the Canterbury region. This project is a core deliverable for Action 4 under the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan and is intended to provide a region-wide, strategic framework for identifying where Nature-based Solutions (NbS) may be protected, restored, enhanced, and integrated to support a climate-resilient, low-emissions Canterbury.

The BGN Plan for the Canterbury region will seek to address the wider functional blue-green network and the role of NbS across multiple land tenures and ecosystems. The plan should not be limited to public open space planning alone, and the procurement is expected to result in a regional BGN Plan that is strategic rather than site-design focused and practical enough to guide investment, collaboration, planning, and future local implementation of NbS.

Timeframe

The project is expected to be completed in 37 weeks. Following the procurement process, the project will commence in November 2026 and be complete in mid-2027, in time for consideration and endorsement at the June – August 2027 regional fora meetings.

Required supplier capability and approach

- a clear methodology for preparing a Canterbury BGN Plan that prioritises climate adaptation planning and is grounded in NbS best practice, and helps to inform emerging environmental policy, local government roles and responsibilities, and spatial planning requirements for Canterbury
- a multidisciplinary team with capability in landscape-scale planning, ecology, biodiversity, freshwater and coastal systems, spatial analysis and GIS, climate adaptation, planning, policy, and engagement
- a plan that uses as a starting point the large range of existing information and data sets already compiled, including current hazard, climate, biodiversity, catchment, cultural, recreation, and public land data, while identifying and addressing those information gaps that are material to preparation of the plan
- a strong spatial component, including geospatial analysis, mapping, prioritisation, and delivery of GIS-compatible outputs in a format that is accessible to all Canterbury councils
- support CCPP engagement with council partners, mana whenua, infrastructure providers, government agencies, environmental organisations, land-based sectors, and the wider public at an appropriate level
- an implementation-oriented set of outputs, including a regional BGN Plan with a supporting decision-making framework, and enabling tools to support cross-boundary collaboration
- a delivery programme that enables the BGN Plan to inform upcoming regional spatial planning and related climate adaptation, biodiversity, and infrastructure planning

processes, and considers existing statutory land and water management obligations and planning frameworks.

Matters of importance to the CCPP

- a plan that is developed through strong regional collaboration between Canterbury councils, mana whenua, and stakeholders
- a strategic plan and resources that can operate across district and catchment boundaries and help align regional and territorial authority actions
- alignment with current local government roles, responsibilities and work programmes, the emerging planning reform context, and (where possible) the anticipated regional spatial planning process
- use of existing datasets, information, and previous council and Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan work as the foundation for the project, rather than duplicating effort
- recognition of the multiple co-benefits of a BGN Plan and NbS for biodiversity protection and enhancement, hazard resilience, community wellbeing, and cultural values as interrelated outcomes
- a plan that is useful for local decision makers; covering priorities, phasing, decision rules, and clear indications of what councils and partners can apply locally.

Key deliverables

Expected deliverables are set out sequentially below.

- inception/evidence base report: including methodology, quality assurance, co-created engagement plan (developed with the project team), data and evidence base registry, and baseline spatial package
- engagement: support the project team with engagement planning and implementation during the appropriate project phases (exact deliverables to be agreed as part of co-creation of engagement plan)
- opportunity and constraints mapping: maps and analysis identifying existing network assets, strategic corridors, nodes, priority landscapes/catchments, and key opportunity and constraint areas for NbS
- draft Canterbury BGN Plan: setting out the vision, objectives, strategic spatial framework, priority opportunity areas, implementation directions, and recommended next steps
- decision-making framework for local users: practical framework, criteria, tools, and guidance to support application of the BGN Plan by Canterbury councils and partners
- final BGN Plan and associated information: final revised plan incorporating feedback and ready for use as the region's strategic blue-green network framework, as well as all final spatial layers, map products, metadata, assumptions, and handover notes.

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Implementation Plan Quarterly Progress Report: July 2026

Overall summary

CCPP has is progressing well overall, with most actions advancing as planned. The strategic review has been completed and Mayoral Forum decisions in August 2026 will dictate the next stages.

Key actions 1–4 are generally on track, with Actions 1 and 4 awaiting approval from the Mayoral Forum for procurement. Actions 5–10 face some challenges to delivery due to resource constraints and Year 3 delivery decisions.

Financial forecasting remains below the allocated budget, consistent with previous reporting, primarily due to earlier delays and resourcing constraints that have since been addressed.

Status	
	On track
	Some risks, needs close attention
	Off track, needs immediate attention
	Not yet started / on hold

Action Progress Summary

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
1.Understanding Climate Risks and Improving Resilience	<u>Sub-action 1.1</u> Risk visualisation tool Lead: Selwyn District Council.	On track	The data sufficiency review has been completed and confirmed that existing risk data is sufficient to develop the Resilience Explorer Tool (REx). The tool will enable councils to assess risk impacts across four decision contexts: adaptation planning, asset and infrastructure management, land use planning and development, and emergency management. Identified data gaps and opportunities for future functionality enhancements were discussed with the working group and shared with councils. The proposed approach is to pilot REx using existing data, allowing councils to test its functionality and inform recommendations on future investment beyond FY27/28.	- Approval to procure the Resilience Explorer tool - CMF: 28 August 2026 Upcoming work below subject to CMF approval - Tool procurement: September 2026 - Tool setup completed: November 2026 - Council onboarding and staff training completed: December 2026 - Pilot testing phase: January–June 2027 - Evaluation and recommendations on future investment: June 2027 (to inform FY27/28 onwards)
	<u>Sub-action 1.2</u> Climate change risk and urgency assessment Lead: Canterbury Regional Council	Not yet started		

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
2.Emissions reduction	<u>Sub-action 2.1</u> Develop greenhouse gas emissions inventories and identify transition pathways. Lead: Canterbury Regional Council	Proceeding to closure.	Community emissions inventories for the financial year 24/25, prepared as part of Canterbury councils' participation in the Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) initiative, are due to be finalised and are expected in August 2026. Following a review of the Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) subscription, and the withdrawal of several participating councils resulting in increased subscription costs, the Working Group recommended not renewing the LEDP subscription for Year 3. The recommendation includes reallocating the funding to other CCPP actions. This decision has been endorsed by both the Policy Forum and Chief Executive Forum.	Community level GHG emissions inventories (regional and district level) received for FY 24/25: August 2026.
	<u>Sub-action 2.3</u> Regional low emissions transition plan Lead: Canterbury Regional Council	On track	Draft emissions reduction actions are now available for consideration. Forum feedback is sought to inform their refinement, which is progressing through ongoing feasibility testing with council subject matter experts and budget holders. Engagement with elected representatives has been completed through the Climate Champions Reference Group, and broader stakeholder engagement is now underway to test and refine the draft actions.	- Refining draft emissions reduction actions: May – August 2026 - Testing actions with council subject matter experts, potential delivery teams, and budget holders - Incorporating short-term action resourcing needs into councils LTPs - Testing actions with stakeholders. - Transition to low emissions initiatives received for endorsement: - CPF: 18 Sept 2026 - CEF: 19 October 2026 - CMF: 20 November 2026 - Final transition to low emissions plan received for approval: early to mid-2027.
3.Adaptation planning	<u>Sub-action 3.1</u> Enable councils in Canterbury to work effectively and efficiently together with communities on adaptation planning and implementation. Lead: Hurunui District Council	Minor risk to timeframes due to resource constraints	The situational analysis for adaptation planning is completed. The findings from phase one and recommendations for the next phase have been written up and feedback is being sought currently.	- Engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga: TBC - Situational analysis of adaptation planning report & next steps: - CPF: 18 September 2026 - CEF: 19 October 2026 - CMF: 20 November 2026
4.Nature Based Solutions	<u>Sub-action 4.2</u> Blue-Green Network plan for Canterbury Lead: Waimakariri District Council	Some risks remain as the current available budget is less than project estimates.	Scoping for the Blue-Green Network Plan has been completed by Boffa Miskell to support the procurement process. The proposed scope has been shared with the working group and councils. Staff in flood protection, biodiversity, and science were engaged to draft the scope and will continue through the development of the Plan.	- Approval of the BGN Plan scope and procurement approach as presented in the Boffa Miskell Scoping Report: CMF: 28 August 2026 - Procurement of BGN Plan (subject to sufficient funding being made available to cover the recommended scope and other approvals): September 2026

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
	<u>Sub-action 4.2a</u> Collaborate with key stakeholders to provide guidance on Blue-Green infrastructure placement and hazard resilience investment Lead: Waimakariri District Council	On track	The ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment was shared with Lincoln University (LU) to incorporate into their BGN mapping of the study area and to test the applicability of the information.	Results from usability testing of the Ecosystem Risk and Vulnerability data: TBC
	<u>Sub-action 4.2b</u> Collaborate and align with Greater Christchurch Partnership and key stakeholders to deliver a Blue-Green Network Lead: Waimakariri District Council	On track	The Boffa Miskell BGN scoping report was shared with the Greater Christchurch Partnership and feedback was considered before it was finalised.	Collaboration with the Greater Christchurch Partnership (GCP) is ongoing
	<u>Sub-action 4.2c</u> Investigate the feasibility of establishing Blue-Green infrastructure on council-owned land Lead: All councils	Not yet started		
5.Climate Change Education and Advocacy	<u>Sub-action 5.1</u> Continue to develop the "It's Time, Canterbury" initiative Lead: Canterbury Regional Council	Proceeding to closure.	The external review found strong support for regional collaboration, but the It's Time, Canterbury platform is underperforming due to an unclear purpose, limited resourcing, and generic messaging that doesn't reflect local action. Staff recommended disestablishing the platform, with Environment Canterbury focusing on regional climate messaging through other methods and councils continuing local communications. The recommendations were endorsed by the Policy Forum and Chief Executive Forum.	Closure note – September 2026
	<u>Sub-action 5.2</u> Produce communications materials with CDEM that integrate climate action and resilience to natural hazards Lead: Canterbury Regional Council	Minor risk to timeframes due to previous delays	CRC and CDEM will collaborate to develop a practical, ready-to-use engagement toolkit for district Emergency Management Officers in 2027. The scope and approach will be discussed and agreed in August, once the CDEM Disaster Resilience Strategy is finalised.	- Meeting to develop scope and approach to produce content for a campaign/toolkit: August 2026 - Toolkit delivered: 2027

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
6.Supporting Papatipu Rūnanga	<u>Sub-action 6.1</u> Understand the climate action requirements of papatipu rūnanga across Canterbury Lead: All councils	Minor risk to timeframes pending progress of sub-action 6.2	The engagement approach is pending the letter to Rūnanga Chairs (see below), following confirmation of the Year 3 work programme.	See below
	<u>Sub-action 6.2</u> Support councils to work in partnership with papatipu rūnanga on climate action planning Lead: CMF Secretariat	Minor risk to timeframes pending approval of CCPP review	A letter to Papatipu Rūnanga chairs has been drafted, providing an update on CCPP implementation progress and inviting them to participate in or contribute to actions of interest. Once the Year 3 work programme has been determined, the letter will be revisited. Responses will determine next steps and engagement approach.	Send a letter to Rūnanga Chairs inviting kōrero on CCPP actions in the Year 3 work programme: tentative August 2026.
7.Integrating climate change considerations in council processes	<u>Sub-action 7.1</u> Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations across all council business Lead: Ashburton District Council	Delivery risk due to constrained resource capacity	The delivery priority for Year 3 is to support councils in embedding climate considerations into long-term planning. The group is planning a webinar and a library of reference materials to help councils integrate climate considerations into their long-term planning processes. Delivery dates for these initiatives are still to be confirmed.	- Canterbury webinar on embedding climate considerations into LTPs: TBC - Library of reference material: TBC
8.Climate Funding and Financing	<u>Sub-action 8.1</u> Advocate to central government for funding to be made available for the climate-related actions Lead: Christchurch City Council	Proceeding to closure.	Work to support the identification of funding opportunities for climate initiatives, particularly Action 2, is ongoing. Given this, and that no specific deliverables are anticipated under this action, it has been proposed that the action be closed as part of the CCPP Review, with the funding advisory function retained as a responsibility of the Climate Change Working Group. The recommendations were endorsed by the Policy Forum and Chief Executive Forum.	- Identification of funding options to support work following implementation of CCPP actions: TBC - Closure note – September 2026
9.Monitoring and Evaluation	<u>Sub-action 9.1</u> Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan Lead: Environment Canterbury	Paused	A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was developed in September 2025 and agreed by action leads and the working group; however, progress has since been paused due to staff capacity constraints. Implementation reporting continues through quarterly updates to regional fora, and recommendations for Year 3 and beyond are being provided as part of the strategic review of the CCPP.	No upcoming deliverables or key dates at this stage.
10.Implementation	Lead: Environment Canterbury (with action leads)	On track	A strategic review of CCPP actions has been completed, with recommendations for Year 3 and beyond to be provided through this reporting cycle to regional forums. Implementation plans will be updated accordingly to reflect approved work and support delivery of the programme.	- Approval sought on CCPP review recommendations for Year 3: - CMF: 28 August 2026 - Updated Project Implementation Plans post-CCPP review approval: September 2026 (tentative)

Actual Staff Time Reporting – hours/month

Table 1: Staff Time Reporting per month over the past 4 months

	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026
CMF Secretariat	1.25h	0h	1h	1
Kaikōura District Council	3.5h	8h	0h	3h
Hurunui District Council	33.25h	28.5h	19.75h	37.25h
Waimakariri District Council	62.5h	67h	38.5h	38.5h
Christchurch City Council	30h	8h	3h	2h
Selwyn District Council	25h	40h	30h	30h
Ashburton District Council	1h	12h	6h	Not reported
Timaru District Council	4h	3h	8h	6h
Mackenzie District Council	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
Waimate District Council	0h	0h	0h	0h
Waitaki District Council	2h	10h	9h	2h
Canterbury Regional Council	439h	392h	356.75h	303.5

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Budget Summary 2024-2027

1. The CCPP budget approved by the Mayoral Forum (excl. GST) is \$190,140 for year 1 (Y1), \$741,049 for year 2 (Y2), and \$540,143 for year 3 (Y3). Due to invoicing errors, \$165,339.54 was received in Y1.
2. The resulting Y1 underspend of \$117,461.25 was carried forward, increasing the Y2 budget to \$858,510.25 (Table 3).
3. In Year 2, \$348,271.49 was spent. This is consistent with previous forecasts and lower than originally planned due to earlier delays in Actions 1 and 4 which have large funding envelopes. Both actions are now at procurement stage.
4. The Mayoral Forum agreed in May 2026 to carry forward the underspend of \$510,238.76 into Year 3.
5. Table 2 summarises expenditure to date (green), committed expenditure (red), and forecast expenditure (black) across actions, pending approval of the CCPP Strategic Review. This is based on proceeding with the recommendations of the strategic review, and therefore subject to the Mayoral Forum's decisions on Year 3 delivery and budget.

Table 2: Detailed breakdown of expenditure for Year 2 (excl. GST)

Action	Deliverable	Y2 Expenditure
1.1	1.1 Risk Visualisation tool: Preliminary scoping report	\$4,000.00
	1.1 Risk Visualisation tool: Tool development	\$48,000.00
2	2.1 Emissions Reduction: GHG Emissions modelling pathway tool subscription	\$70,600.00
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: Assessment	\$43,478.26
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: stakeholder facilitation	\$7,875.00
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: stakeholder catering	\$623.20
	2.3 Emissions Reduction: Regional low emissions transition plan	\$50,000.00
3	3.1 Best practice approach for adaptation planning	\$0
4	4.1 Ecosystem Risk Assessment: Final risk and vulnerability assessment	\$69,521.73
	4.2 Develop scope for procurement for a Blue-Green Network plan and guidance	\$27,500
	4.2 Develop a Blue-Green Network plan and guidance	\$0
	4.2.c Feasibility of establishing Blue-Green infrastructure	\$0
6	Understand the climate action requirements of papatipu rūnanga	\$0
9	Monitoring and evaluation indicators and plan	\$0
10	Project Manager (0.6 FTE)	\$26,673.30
Totals		\$348,271.49

Table 3: Revenue (2024-2027): Canterbury Council Financial Contributions

The figures shown in Table 3 below are based on the Year 3 contributions agreed within the CCPP. Once a Year 3 delivery option has been confirmed by the Mayoral Forum, this will be updated.

Council	CMF ratios	Y1 LTP (\$)	Y1 LTP (\$)	Y2 LTP (\$)	Y3 LTP (\$)	Total Y1-Y3 LTP (\$)	Total Y1-Y3 LTP (\$)**
Canterbury Regional Council	20.5%	38,950.00	33,791.74	151,700.00	110,700	301,350.00	\$296,191.74
Christchurch City	20.5%	39,000.00	33,913.04	152,000.00	110,000	301,000.00	\$295,913.04
Selwyn	10.7%	20,330.00	17,678.26	79,180.00	57,780	157,290.00	\$154,638.26
Waimakariri	10.7%	20,330.00	17,678.26	79,180.00	57,780	157,290.00	\$154,638.26
Ashburton	9.8%	18,620.00	16,191.30	72,520.00	52,920	144,060.00	\$141,631.30
Timaru	9.8%	18,620.00	16,191.30	72,520.00	52,920	144,060.00	\$141,631.30
Hurunui	5.2%	9,880.00	8,591.30	38,480.00	28,080	76,440.00	\$75,151.30
Waimate	3.9%	7,410.00	6,443.48	28,860.00	21,060	57,330.00	\$56,441.74
Waitaki	3.9%	7,500.00	6,521.74	29,609.00	21,903	59,012.00	\$58,033.74
Kaikōura	2.5%	4,750.00	4,130.43	18,500.00	13,500	36,750.00	\$36,130.43
Mackenzie	2.5%	4,750.00	4,130.43	18,500.00	13,500	36,750.00	\$36,130.43
TOTAL budget	100 %	190,140.00 PLANNED	\$165,339.54 RECEIVED	741,049.00 RECEIVED	540,143.00 TO BE INVOICED Aug. 2026	1,471,332.00 PLANNED	1,446,531.51 **WITH ACTUAL \$ RECEIVED IN Y1

Table 4: Summary of Budget and Actuals for Years 1 and 2.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Approved budget	\$190,140.00	\$741,049.00	TBC
Actual budget received and expected	\$165,339.54	\$741,049.00	
Adjusted budget (inc. carry-overs)	\$165,339.54	\$858,510.25 (Inc. carry-over from Y1)	
Expenditure	\$47,878.29	\$348,271.49	
Forecast	-	-	
Total costs	\$47,878.29	\$348,271.49	
Underspent	\$117,461.25	\$510,238.76	

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Hamish Riach, Chair, Economic Development Forum
Jesse Burgess, Chair, Energy Strategy Steering Group

Canterbury Regional Energy Workstream update

Purpose

1. This paper presents the Regional Energy Strategic Framework for final approval, the draft Regional Energy Action Plan for review and feedback, and options for future governance and leadership arrangements to support implementation, coordination and oversight.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **approves the Regional Energy Strategic Framework, incorporating minor amendments since its endorsement in May 2026**
2. **notes that the Regional Energy Strategic Framework will be circulated to stakeholders and partners involved in its development and published on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website in September 2026**
3. **endorses in principle the overall direction of the draft Regional Energy Action Plan and provides feedback to inform its further development by 11 September 2026**
4. **agrees in principle that work is undertaken to establish an expanded Regional Energy Governance Group to maintain coordination and oversight of the regional energy work and notes that this will include consideration of a potential staged transition approach**
5. **notes that the draft Regional Energy Action Plan, including proposed governance and leadership arrangements, will be refined and brought back to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for approval in November 2026.**

Background

2. In 2024, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) initiated the regional energy workstream. The workstream is led by the Economic Development Forum (ED Forum) and overseen by the Energy Strategy Steering Group, a sub-group of ED Forum members.

3. Phase One delivered an energy inventory, providing the first comprehensive overview of the region's energy landscape. The Canterbury Energy Inventory and accompanying summary infographic were approved for publication by the Mayoral Forum on 30 May 2025. At the same meeting, the Forum endorsed the continuation of the regional energy work through a phased and staged approach (as outlined in Table 1). Each stage builds on earlier work.

Table 1 – Phased approach to Regional Energy Workstream

Phase	Regional approach to energy	Progress
One – Develop a regional energy inventory	Energy Inventory for Canterbury (Year 1 – FY24/25)	Complete
Two – Develop a regional energy strategy	Stage 1: Strategic Framework (Year 1 – FY25/26)	Complete – subject to final approval and publication
	Stage 2: Action Plan (Year 2 – FY26/27)	Draft complete – subject to feedback and endorsement of overall direction
	Stage 3: Comprehensive energy strategy and implementation plan (Year 2/3+)	Not yet started

Regional context

4. The Regional Energy Strategic Framework and Action Plan support the Mayoral Forum's vision for a strong regional economy, resilient and connected communities, and an improved quality of life for all. Energy has been identified as one of the five priority pillars in Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready and is reflected in the priorities set out in the Canterbury Ambition. The regional energy workstream also aligns closely with the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan action related to emissions reduction pathways and other key regional priorities such as the Regional Land Transport Plan, and regional spatial planning.
5. The Energy Inventory highlights both Canterbury's significant renewable energy potential and the scale of investment required to support future electricity demand. In June 2026, the independent expert panel assessing the Haldon Solar Farm under the Fast-track Approvals process released its draft decision, granting provisional approval for the project. If developed, the approximately 320-hectare solar farm near Lake Benmore is expected to generate enough electricity to power around 45,000 homes. The proposal illustrates the continuing pace of renewable energy investment in Canterbury and reinforces the importance of regional coordination to maximise opportunities, understand cumulative impacts, and support the delivery of a resilient and affordable energy system.

Regional Energy Strategy update

Strategic Framework development

6. The Regional Energy Strategic Framework was endorsed by the Chief Executives Forum (CE Forum) and Mayoral Forum in May 2026, with the understanding that further refinements may arise through ongoing engagement with mana whenua.
7. No substantive changes have been made since endorsement. Minor editorial corrections have been incorporated, and Te Reo Māori translations have been added to titles and headings. The final Strategic Framework (Attachment 1) is now presented for final approval. Following approval, the Strategic Framework will be published on the Mayoral Forum website, and an update will be provided to stakeholders and partners involved in its development.

Action Plan development

8. A draft Regional Energy Action Plan has been developed to support implementation of the Regional Energy Strategic Framework.
9. The initial draft actions were informed by the Regional Energy Inventory, the direction provided by the Strategic Framework, and earlier stakeholder input. The draft was also informed by initial conversations with representatives from Te Pātaka Banks Peninsula Papatipu Rūnanga, facilitated by Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited, and representatives from Aoraki Environmental Consultancy and Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua.
10. Targeted engagement with key stakeholders helped to refine the proposed actions, identify opportunities for collaboration, and ensure alignment with existing initiatives. The draft was then independently peer reviewed by Beca. The peer review informed a further iteration of the draft, which was then circulated to approximately 80 stakeholder organisations, community groups, councils and partners for broader feedback.
11. The Action Plan provided as Attachment 2 reflects feedback received through both the broader stakeholder engagement and Beca's independent technical peer review.
12. The actions have been sequenced across the short to medium (three years) and long term (10 years). A small number of early priority actions and potential 'quick wins' have also been identified for progression within the next year to build momentum and demonstrate early progress. These actions are enabling or foundational in nature and either support the delivery of the broader programme of work or need to be progressed early to inform other regional priorities. This includes progressing a regional energy evidence base to support future regional spatial planning. Further work to prioritise, sequence and refine the actions, including implementation considerations, will continue as the Action Plan is finalised.
13. Consideration is being given to monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements to support implementation of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan. This will establish

how progress and outcomes will be monitored and reported over time, with further recommendations to be developed as the Action Plan is finalised. In addition, placeholder content relating to governance and leadership arrangements will be updated as part of the finalisation process (see paragraphs 16-22 below).

14. The Action Plan will be designed to ensure a consistent look and feel with the Regional Energy Strategic Framework.
15. The draft Action Plan is presented for endorsement of its overall direction and feedback to inform its further development. Feedback on the draft Action Plan is invited from the Mayoral Forum by 11 September 2026. The Action Plan will be further refined to reflect feedback received, including from mana whenua, and to incorporate any other changes identified as the Plan is finalised. The final Action Plan would be presented to the Mayoral Forum in November 2026 for approval.

Governance and leadership arrangements for Action Plan implementation

16. As the Regional Energy Action Plan moves into implementation, governance and leadership arrangements will need to support coordinated delivery, monitor progress, maintain momentum, and enable collaboration across the region. Stakeholders have consistently highlighted that establishing the right governance or leadership arrangements will be critical to successful implementation. A clear structure would also provide a central forum to lead priority actions, particularly where there is willingness to progress, but coordination is needed.
17. Three governance models were identified for consideration:
 - (1) Canterbury Mayoral Forum oversight
 - (2) An expanded Regional Energy Governance Group
 - (3) An independent Regional Energy Trust
18. A high-level overview of these models is provided in Attachment 3.
19. At its meeting on 3 August 2026, the CE Forum expressed support for consideration of an expanded Regional Energy Governance Group (Option (2)), that could support establishment of a trust type structure, as the preferred model for further consideration.
20. Work is underway to develop detailed recommendations on the proposed governance arrangements on this basis, including structure, membership, terms of reference, and resourcing implications. These recommendations will be presented to the ED Forum, CE Forum and Mayoral Forum between September and November for consideration and decision.
21. Implementation of the Action Plan will also require a small delivery team to coordinate activity, support governance, monitor progress, and facilitate collaboration across partners. It is anticipated that this function would initially be supported through in-kind

contributions from partner organisations, with the scale and longer-term resourcing requirements to be considered as implementation progresses.

Funding and resourcing

22. Delivery of the regional energy workstream has benefitted from the high level of in-kind resourcing. Current resourcing is approximately 1.5 FTE, drawn from the Regional Public Service, Canterbury Regional Council (two staff), Kaikōura District Council and, more recently, Christchurch City Council. While the Regional Public Service's resourcing contribution reduced from 1 July 2026, it continues to be represented on the Project Team and Steering Group and has played a significant role in establishing and progressing the regional energy workstream.
23. Of the overall budget of \$87,000 for this workstream, approximately \$32,000 has been spent, with an additional \$13,000 committed to ongoing engagement activities and the remainder available for future work (approximately \$42,000). Funding to date has supported engagement activities and external project support, including a technical peer review of the draft Action Plan.
24. Existing funding and in-kind resourcing will be sufficient to complete the final Action Plan. As noted above, delivery of the Action Plan would be reliant on continued in-kind resourcing in the short term, with longer-term resourcing requirements to be considered as implementation progresses.

Engagement

25. A wide range of stakeholders have engaged in the regional energy work to date, including councils across the region, the energy sector, industry, major energy users, Ngāi Tahu Holdings, academia, and central government agencies.
26. A light-touch, targeted engagement approach was used to invite feedback from community groups with an interest in energy, as well as disability, youth and older persons' advocacy groups. This was intended to ensure a broad range of perspectives were considered in the development of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan.
27. Efforts were undertaken to engage with all Papatipu Rūnanga across the region, including exploring opportunities for Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities to support mana whenua engagement, consistent with direction from the Mayoral Forum. Two hui have been held with representatives from Te Pātaka Banks Peninsula Papatipu Rūnanga, facilitated by Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited. The team has also had initial meetings with representatives from Aukaha, Aoraki Environmental Consultancy and Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, and Whitiara. The team also reached out by email to Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura.

Next steps

28. Key next steps include:

- i. subject to approval, publishing the Regional Energy Strategic Framework on the Mayoral Forum website and providing an update to stakeholders and partners
- ii. progressing development of governance arrangements and a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework to support implementation of the Regional Energy Strategic Framework and Action Plan
- iii. refining the draft Regional Energy Action Plan, including incorporating feedback received through the review process and from stakeholders and mana whenua
- iv. presenting the final Regional Energy Action Plan to the Mayoral Forum for approval in November 2026.

29. A summary of key milestones for the regional energy workstream is provided in Attachment 4.

Attachments

- **Attachment 1:** Regional Energy Strategic Framework supporting report – Our Energy Future: A regional approach to energy in Waitaha | Canterbury
- **Attachment 2:** Draft Waitaha | Canterbury Regional Energy Action Plan
- **Attachment 3:** Overview of options for governance arrangements
- **Attachment 4:** Regional energy workstream key milestones July – December 2026

Our energy future:

A regional approach to energy
in Waitaha Canterbury

Te pūngao ki Tua:

He tirohanga ā-rohe ki te pūngao
i Waitaha

AUGUST 2026

CANTERBURY
Mayoral Forum

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Foreword

Kupu takamua

Energy is fundamental to Waitaha Canterbury's prosperity, resilience, and wellbeing. It underpins our key sectors, from agriculture and manufacturing to tourism and emerging industries. It is critical to support investment, productivity, and sustainable economic growth across the region. Just as importantly, reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy enables our communities and whānau to thrive, supporting warm homes, essential local services, and equitable access to opportunity.

The strategic importance of energy is reflected across key regional initiatives. It is identified as one of five pillars in the Canterbury World-stage Ready future regional deal foundational document and a key priority within the Canterbury Ambition, developed in partnership by Business Canterbury.

As Canterbury grows and evolves, so too do the opportunities and challenges associated with how we generate, distribute, and use energy. Ensuring security of supply – particularly in the context of increasing electrification, climate variability, and system constraints – building business confidence, reducing emissions, and supporting thriving communities are interconnected priorities. The choices we make now will shape not only our environmental footprint, but also our long-term economic competitiveness and resilience.

This strategic framework sets out a coordinated regional response to these challenges and opportunities. It signals Canterbury's collective commitment to plan ahead, align effort and work in partnership across local government, industry, energy providers, mana whenua, central government agencies, and the wider community. The valuable input and support of these stakeholders has strengthened both the ambition and the practicality of this framework.

Canterbury is uniquely positioned, with abundant renewable resources, innovative businesses, and strong community leadership. By working together, we can harness these advantages to build a secure, affordable, and resilient energy system – one that supports a future-focused regional economy and unlocks lasting benefits for communities, businesses and industry across Canterbury.

I thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this framework and look forward to the collective action that will follow.

Mayor Nigel Bowen
Chair, Canterbury Mayoral Form





A regional approach to energy in Canterbury

He tirohanga ā-rohe ki te pūngao i Waitaha

Energy is a critical lifeline – it underpins the economy and is essential to our way of life.

Canterbury's regional approach to energy has been initiated through the Canterbury Mayoral Forum and its Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025. The Plan for Canterbury recognised that energy security will be critical to support opportunities for the region. It also highlighted that renewable energy will become an increasingly important role in responding to climate change risks, and that Canterbury has an opportunity to be at the forefront of an energy transition to attract and retain talent, investment, and technologies.

The 2026-28 Plan for Canterbury continues this commitment.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum made a commitment to supporting the region to foster partnerships, to investigate barriers, harness opportunities to improve our energy security and systems in ways that maximise the benefits for our community, economy and environment.

The regional approach to energy has three integrated components:

Energy Inventory 2025	A comprehensive overview of Canterbury's energy landscape – this forms the evidence base for future work and is now available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website.
Strategic framework	Establishes a shared regional vision, outcomes, and priorities, and sets the strategic direction needed to capture the benefits of the energy transition while addressing associated challenges.
Action Plan / Roadmap	Translates the strategy into delivery by identifying and prioritising practical actions to deliver on the energy goals for the region.

Strategic Framework

This Regional Energy Strategic framework positions Canterbury as a leader in sustainable energy and recognises the region's significant role in the wider South Island and New Zealand energy landscape. It is presented as a high-level 'plan on a page', with additional detail set out in this report.

The strategic framework is intended for a broad audience. It supports coordinated decision-making, investment, and collaboration across the region, acting as a shared reference point for councils, organisations and partners working toward a common energy future. It aims to shape a collaborative energy future for Canterbury – benefiting individuals, communities, and industry alike.

The strategic framework is designed to be adaptive rather than static. It will evolve over time in response to shifting public expectations, emerging technologies, and changing energy demands.

Key drivers of the strategic framework

The energy landscape is changing

New Zealand, like many countries, is at a major transition point – moving toward low- or zero-carbon energy and shifting from a centralised supply model to a more distributed system. Growing electricity demand adds further pressure. A regional strategy will help Canterbury navigate this transition and respond in ways that best support our communities.

Unlocking economic, environmental and social benefits

The energy transition presents substantial opportunities. With a clear, committed plan, Canterbury can capture these benefits locally and achieve the right balance between protecting the environment and promoting economic growth.

Energy and economic growth are intrinsically linked

Reliable energy is critical to supporting existing industry and attracting new investment. Confidence in the region's direction and security of supply has direct implications for job creation, business prosperity and regional economic resilience.

Coordination is essential

Energy planning must be aligned with existing plans and strategies. Energy intersects with nearly every aspect of regional development – including planning, economic growth, climate adaptation and resilience, environmental sustainability, transport, industry, and urban development.

Supporting people and communities

Energy is woven into every part of modern life. To support families, communities, businesses and industries across Canterbury, the region requires a well-functioning, reliable, and equitable energy system and a well-managed energy transition is essential.

Implications for agriculture and the rural sector

Canterbury's strong rural and agricultural base contributes significantly to national GDP. Regional energy planning must consider agricultural production, alignment with emissions reduction efforts, and opportunities for coordinated investment in rural energy solutions.



Who we've connected with and what we've heard

The strategic framework has been shaped by the aspirations and perspectives of the energy sector, communities, iwi, industry, academia, and local and central government. It brings together diverse views and priorities. While consensus is not always possible, there is a strong willingness to collaborate to create a shared direction for Canterbury's energy future. Key messages include:

- **Energy is broader than electricity** – Canterbury's future requires a whole-system approach that considers all forms of energy.
- **Electrification is driving change** – electricity and electrifying processes represent the areas of greatest change and opportunity.
- **Hydropower is Canterbury's energy superpower** – the region hosts some of the largest hydro-electric schemes in New Zealand, making a significant contribution to the national grid. That means we can also be vulnerable during dry years.
- **Biomass potential** – Canterbury is uniquely positioned to leverage biomass as part of a sustainable energy mix.
- **Regional decisions have wider impacts** – decisions here have impacts for neighbouring regions, the wider South Island, and New Zealand as a whole.
- **Multiple futures are possible** – outcomes will depend on national demand and supply, population growth, new technologies, and geopolitical developments.
- **A sustainable energy future affects everyone** – from households paying power bills, farmers managing irrigation costs, and small businesses keeping the lights on, to community groups and large energy users.
- **An energy future for Canterbury needs to be enduring** – stable, long-term settings are important to withstand political change and provide investment certainty.

Ngāi Tahu

Māori have interests across all parts of the energy system. The role of natural resources in Māori culture, values, and worldview (Te Ao Māori) is deeply rooted in the concept of kaitiakitanga (guardianship), where land, water, and energy sources are entities with mauri (life force) that must be respected, sustained, and managed for future generations. Ensuring energy is reliable and resilient is particularly important for marae, which often serve as emergency response hubs for their communities. Alongside this, many Māori entities are actively exploring investment opportunities in renewable energy and emerging technologies, positioning iwi as key partners in shaping Canterbury's energy future.

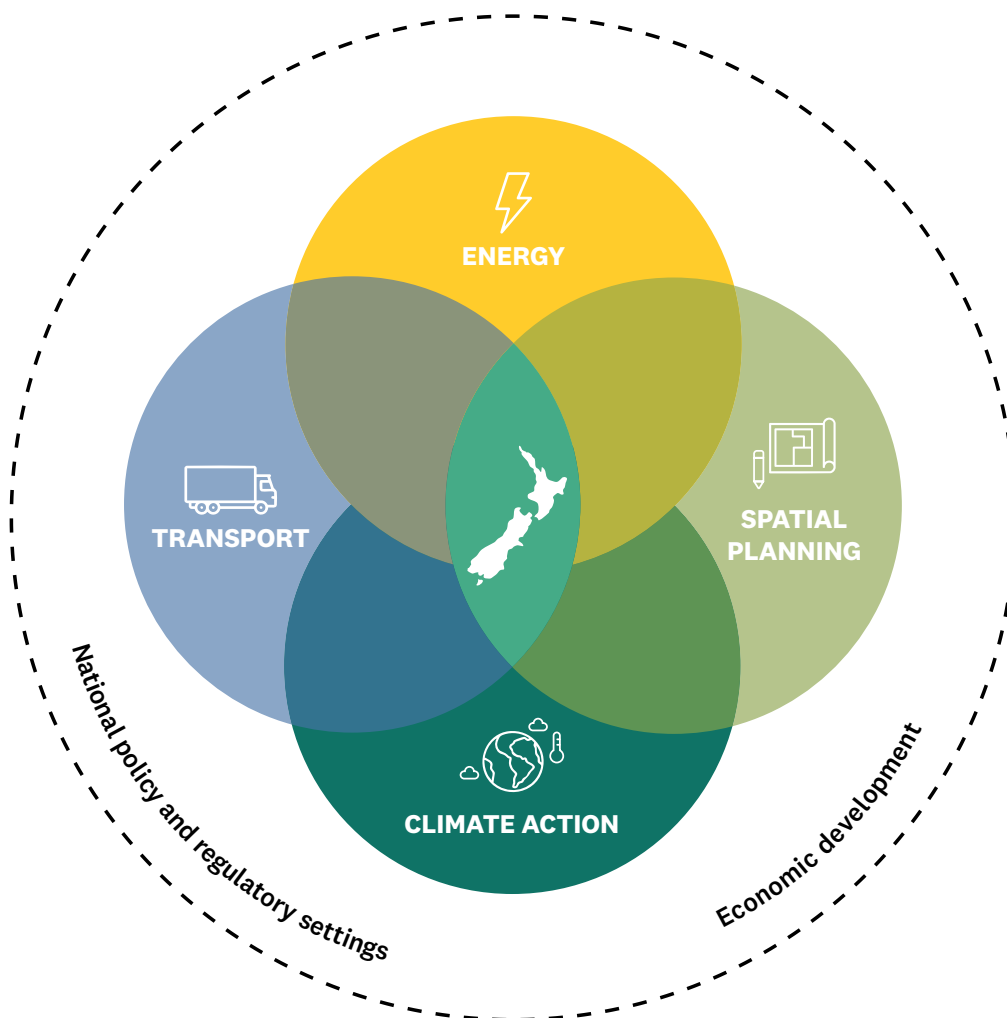
To shape the future of energy in Canterbury, concentrated efforts need to be undertaken to build positive and enduring relationships with mana whenua. Ngāi Tahu holds rangatiratanga over more than 80 per cent of Te Wai Pounamu South Island, including Waitaha Canterbury. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, established under the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996, is statutorily recognised as the representative tribal body of Ngāi Tahu Whānui. There are ten Papatipu Rūnanga in Canterbury who hold mana whenua over their respective takiwā (area, territory):

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura | • Wairewa Rūnanga |
| • Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga | • Te Taumutu Rūnanga |
| • Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki) Rūnanga | • Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua |
| • Te Rūnanga o Koukourārata | • Te Rūnanga o Waihao |
| • Ōnuku Rūnanga | • Te Rūnanga o Moeraki |

Early conversations with some rūnanga have helped to shape the draft Strategic Framework. Further and ongoing dialogue will remain important as the regional energy work progresses.

Interconnections Ngā hononga

Energy is closely connected to other regional priorities related to transport, climate action and spatial planning. Progress in one area can accelerate outcomes in others, but the overlap and interconnections also highlight the need for coordinated prioritisation to maximise impact, avoid duplication, and ensure that limited resources deliver the greatest benefit for Canterbury's communities.

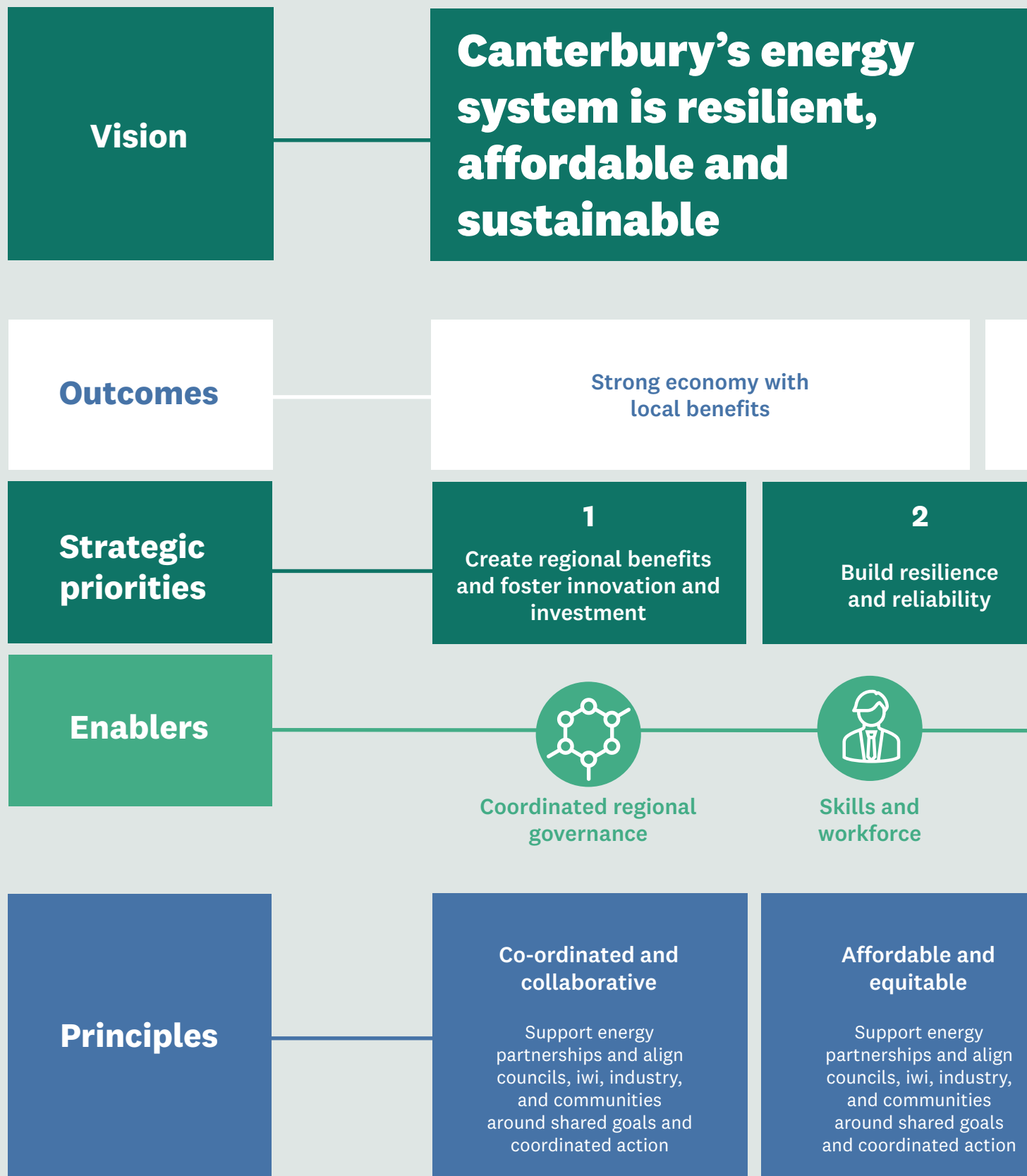


Energy and its interconnection with...	Key Information
 Climate action	The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is advancing regional emissions-reduction work through the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024–27¹. One of the actions commits partners to working together across the region to build equitable, inclusive pathways, targets, and key actions that support New Zealand’s global greenhouse gas emissions-reduction commitments. Progressing both workstreams in a way that is aligned will ensure that energy-focused actions are integrated with wider regional climate priorities.
 Transport	The transition to a lower-emission transport system in Canterbury will have significant impacts on the demand for energy – increased demand for electricity, hydrogen, and other low-emission fuels will require supporting infrastructure and investment. The Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2024–34 supports the transition by prioritising intermodal freight, public transport, and active travel to reduce fossil fuel reliance while also recognising the broader transport system changes that will be required. Looking ahead, businesses and households will likely rely on a combination of electric, hydrogen, and biofuel-powered vehicles. Heavy freight faces considerable challenges as it looks to lower emissions, including limited availability of heavy vehicle charging infrastructure, high costs of converting heavy freight fleets, and uncertainty around fuel pathways and future technologies.
 Spatial planning	Regional spatial planning creates a significant opportunity to integrate energy planning into long-term land use decisions. Spatial plans could guide where renewable energy infrastructure (e.g. solar or wind farms, EV charging stations, community batteries) can be located. Spatial planning can also promote alignment between land use and energy demand and supply, particularly in areas with high distributed energy resources potential, reduce regulatory barriers, and support the establishment of Renewable Energy Zones.² There is also opportunity to influence urban form through spatial planning and reduce car dependency and lower fuel demand.

¹ Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Kua tae te wā, Waitaha 2024–2027

² Renewable Energy Zones: National Consultation 2022, Transpower, p.4.

The Canterbury energy strategic framework – plan on a page



Te anga o te rautaki pūngao o Waitaha – te mahere

Harnessing our unique strengths to support the economy, empower communities, protect the environment and ensure the wellbeing of future generations

Resilient and
secure supply

Thriving environment and
a low emissions future

3

Enable choices
and access

4

Embed a regenerative
energy future

5

Reduce emissions from
transport and industry



Policy,
regulations and
guidance



Shared knowledge,
data and insights



Funding and
investment



Strategic
partnerships

**Te taiao (the natural
environment)**

A holistic view that
prioritises the wellbeing
and interconnection of
te taiao. Relationships
and partnerships are
grounded in Te Ao
values

**Adaptative and action
orientated**

Take a least regrets
approach that balances
urgency with flexibility
as technologies and
circumstances evolve

Place based

Ensure a place-based
approach is integrated
into energy system
planning enabling local
solutions

Vision and outcomes

Ngā matawhanui me ngā hua

Vision: Canterbury's energy system is resilient, affordable and sustainable

Harnessing our unique strengths to support the economy, empower communities, protect the environment and ensure the wellbeing of future generations

Canterbury's energy future is anchored in the strengths that define our region: our distinctive natural environment, a culture of innovation, and a sector committed to working collaboratively to deliver for our communities. By building on these advantages, we can create an energy system that is resilient, affordable, and sustainable – positioning Canterbury to lead the way in a changing energy landscape.

Resilient and secure supply

Resilience means building an energy system that can adapt as technologies evolve, electricity demand grows, geopolitical landscapes change, and climate pressures intensify, while withstanding shocks – from extreme weather to earthquakes and global disruptions. By broadening our generation mix, modernising networks, and using energy more intelligently, we can strengthen supply across both urban and rural Canterbury and reduce exposure to future risks.

Strong economy with local benefits

Affordable and reliable energy underpins jobs, innovation, and investment, supporting households, businesses, and communities. Investment in distributed generation, demand-side tools, and smart infrastructure can lower costs, expand access, increase equity, and unlock regional opportunities through new industries and skilled employment.

Thriving environment and a low-emissions future

Sustainability drives down emissions, protects the environment, and enables growth that benefits future generations. It also empowers communities to participate in and benefit from the energy transition through local projects, emerging technologies, and pathways for skills development. With Canterbury's capacity to adopt and test new solutions, the region is well-positioned to lead in demonstrating innovative approaches that accelerate the shift to a low-emissions future.

This strategic framework provides a clear path forward for an energy system that supports a strong economy, vibrant communities, and a climate-resilient, low-emissions future for Canterbury.

Strategic priorities

Ngā aronga rautaki

A clear, coordinated plan is essential to position Canterbury to meet its energy needs now and into the future. Five strategic priorities have been identified as critical to achieving this. These priorities are closely interconnected, and progress in one area will strengthen outcomes in others. Successfully advancing these priorities will require innovative funding and financing mechanisms, strong partnerships, and ongoing education and upskilling across the region.



Strategic Priority 1 -

Create regional benefits and foster innovation and investment

What this means: Prioritise investment, jobs, talent pipeline and economic opportunities that keep value in Canterbury. Support research, training, new technologies, and smart infrastructure that drive economic opportunity and emissions reduction.

Canterbury is uniquely positioned to lead New Zealand's energy transition due to its abundant natural resources, sun, wind, and water, and its role as a major contributor to South Island economic activity.

Why this matters:

- There are opportunities to build strong regional relationships and strategic partnerships across the energy sector including with key infrastructure and market organisations such as Transpower, electricity distribution businesses, and generators as well as community-council partnerships that support locally led energy initiatives, alongside public-private and private-private partnerships that are collaborative rather than competitive.
- Empowering local solutions through grassroots and community-led initiatives can make a tangible difference in advancing the regional energy transition.
- Building international partnerships and innovation ecosystems can create long-term benefits for Canterbury's economy, knowledge base, and energy innovation.
- Ensuring pathways for energy jobs, from field technicians to engineers, is essential for both current and future needs. This includes attracting and growing the right talent, creating 'green jobs' and providing opportunities for people to work locally on their whenua.
- University of Canterbury, Lincoln University, and Ara Institute all have energy expertise that support energy research, innovation and workforce development.
- Emerging frameworks like Local Area Energy Planning offer opportunities to coordinate energy development across districts, ensuring that Canterbury retains its regional advantages while embracing new technologies and investment models.³





Strategic Priority 2 -

Build resilience and reliability

What this means: Invest in infrastructure, innovation, and smarter networks to ensure Canterbury's energy system is diverse, secure, flexible, and future-ready. Consider the energy needs for adaptation and resilience for emergency hubs, marae, and other critical facilities that support community response and recovery.

Resilience is a critical priority for Canterbury's energy system, which faces increasing risks from climate change, natural hazards, and infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Why this matters:

- The region's energy networks face risks from extreme weather, sea level rise, and earthquakes.
- Reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels strengthens long-term resilience by lowering exposure to supply disruptions and price volatility.
- Energy security extends beyond electricity; liquid fuels for transport, freight, emergency response, and industry, are also critical, and supply disruptions pose significant risk.
- Energy demand is changing in amount, type, and timing, and the electricity grid may require additional services to maintain reliability.
- Secure, reliable infrastructure and transparent network planning are needed so communities and industry can plan for the future with certainty.
- Coordinated leadership and action is essential to ensure resilience and reliability.
- Local energy solutions must align with national frameworks.
- Investments in Battery Energy Storage Systems and distributed generation, such as rooftop solar, can improve reliability and reduce dependence on centralised systems.⁴
- Climate resilience must be integrated into all future energy planning, informed by the work of the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.⁵

⁴ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.39.

⁵ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.38.

Strategic Priority 3 - Enable choices and access

What this means: Empower communities, businesses, iwi and individuals through energy education and partnerships so everyone can participate in and benefit from an affordable, sustainable energy system – with expanded energy options and local energy initiatives.

Improving energy literacy, partnership opportunities, and access to energy options is essential for communities, businesses, and iwi to participate in and benefit from Canterbury's energy system.

Why this matters:

- Communities, businesses, and iwi face varying levels of access to energy knowledge and resources, which can limit participation in the energy transition and reduce opportunities to benefit from local energy solutions, lower costs, and innovative approaches.
- Rapid changes in technology and evolving energy markets are reshaping Canterbury's energy landscape, creating both opportunities and challenges for households, businesses, and communities.
- Up-front costs, perceived complexity, and limited awareness can discourage households and businesses from adopting efficient, renewable, or innovative energy solutions.
- Community energy initiatives provide practical, locally led ways to lower costs, build resilience, and keep benefits within communities. Building knowledge and skills will support informed energy choices and help ensure Canterbury's transition is inclusive, locally led, and innovative.





Strategic Priority 4 -

Embed a regenerative energy future

What this means: Ensure energy choices safeguard the environment, restore ecosystems, reduce waste, and strengthen the circular economy with the right balance of sustainability and te taiao (the natural environment) to enable sustainable and healthy options for future generations.

We must embed sustainability in energy decisions to protect ecosystems, restore habitats, and ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

Why this matters:

- Canterbury is moving toward a more regenerative energy future, with growing investment in renewable generation, circular energy systems, and emerging technologies such as hydrogen and biofuels.
- Large-scale renewable and bioenergy, including organic waste processing, are already demonstrating how circulate approaches can strengthen the region's energy system.
- Developing circular pathways for energy technologies will be increasingly important to reduce waste and support a long-term regenerative energy system.
- These technologies offer opportunities but also come with uncertainties, including supply-chain and implementation challenges that affect how quickly they can contribute to Canterbury's transition goals.
- Protecting te taiao, including valued landscapes, mahinga kai, and taonga species, remains essential as Canterbury expands its renewable and circular energy systems.
- A fair and inclusive transition is critical, so that the shift to new energy technologies and systems does not increase energy hardship and communities, businesses, and iwi can access reliable, affordable energy.

Strategic Priority 5 - Reduce emissions from transport and industry

What this means: Accelerate the transition of Waitaha Canterbury's transport and industrial sectors to low-emission energy through multiple energy options, efficiency measures, and support for innovation and investment.

Shifting Canterbury's transport and industry to low-emission energy opens opportunities for innovation, economic growth, and progress toward a low-carbon future.

Why this matters:

- Transport and industry are major energy users and significant contributors to emissions.⁶
- Electrification is one of the most immediate and scalable pathways to reduce emissions and support the low-carbon transition.
- Canterbury is well-positioned to lead innovation, with local companies and research partners advancing hydrogen technologies, and exploring opportunities in synthetic aviation fuels, and electric freight solutions.⁷
- Industrial process heat offers a major decarbonisation opportunity, with coal-dependent operations able to reduce emissions through electrification, biomass, and heat pump technologies.⁸
- Emerging technologies offer new opportunities, but up-front costs, infrastructure gaps, and knowledge barriers can slow adoption.
- Canterbury's renewable energy resources and grid capacity can support the shift if investment is well targeted and coordinated.
- Collaboration across industry, local and central government, iwi, and communities is essential to align action, share investment, and realise economic, social, and environmental benefits for the region.

⁶ With fossil fuels powering approximately 98% of the national vehicle fleet and 91% of Canterbury's regional fleet

⁷ For example Fabrum and the Hydrogen Aviation Consortium

⁸ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.27.



Enabling success

Mairangatia te angitu

Below is a brief description of the enablers we expect will be needed to shape a regional approach to energy. This list and the descriptions are not exhaustive – they will shift and change as needed.



Coordinated regional governance

Clear leadership, collaboration, and accountability across agencies to drive collective action.



Skills and workforce

Building the capability and capacity needed to deliver an energy future that improves economic resilience and community wellbeing. Canterbury's energy future will be built by people – engineers, tradespeople, planners, and innovators.



Policy, regulations and guidance

Ensuring supportive national and regional policy settings to enable timely, consistent energy action.



Shared knowledge, data and insights

Accessible, trusted information to guide decisions, track progress, and share learning. Drawing on national and international expertise will strengthen Canterbury's ability to apply whole-of-system energy planning approaches and support informed local decision-making.



Funding and investment

Targeted and coordinated investment to unlock opportunities and innovation.



Strategic partnerships

Collaborative relationships across sectors and communities to accelerate progress, unlock innovation and facilitate scale.

Guiding principles

Ngā mātāpono

A resilient, affordable and sustainable energy system for Canterbury will be shaped not only by infrastructure and investment, but by the principles that guide our decisions. These principles reflect the values of our communities and the aspirations of our region. Together, they underpin how we will work collectively to build an energy system that supports the wellbeing and prosperity of people and places for generations to come.

Coordinated and collaborative

Support energy partnerships and align councils, iwi, industry, and communities around shared goals and coordinated action.

Affordable and equitable

Reduce hardship and supporting inclusive participation. Support a fair energy transition for everyone, from individuals to large energy users.

Te taiao (the natural environment)

A holistic view that prioritises the wellbeing and interconnection of te taiao. Relationships and partnerships are grounded in te ao values.

Adaptative and action orientated

Take a least regrets approach that balances urgency with flexibility as technologies and circumstances evolve.

Place based

Ensure a place-based approach is integrated into energy system planning enabling local solutions.

Where to next? Ki hea atu?

Canterbury is still reliant on fossil fuels in the transport, industrial, and agriculture sectors. However, it is well-positioned for the energy transition, with abundant solar, wind, and hydro resources, particularly through the Waitaki hydro scheme.⁹

There is a broad set of opportunities for shaping the energy future in Canterbury and while this strategic framework sets the scene and identifies some of the priorities - it is the next step of developing the action plan/road map that will matter the most.

1

Building relationships and encouraging partnerships

There is a willingness in Canterbury to work together in partnership to achieve shared goals, scale impact, attract investment and share the risk.

2

Determining actions

We'll work together to co-develop the actions that sit underneath the strategic priorities with a focus on which ones we think will make the most positive difference for the region.

3

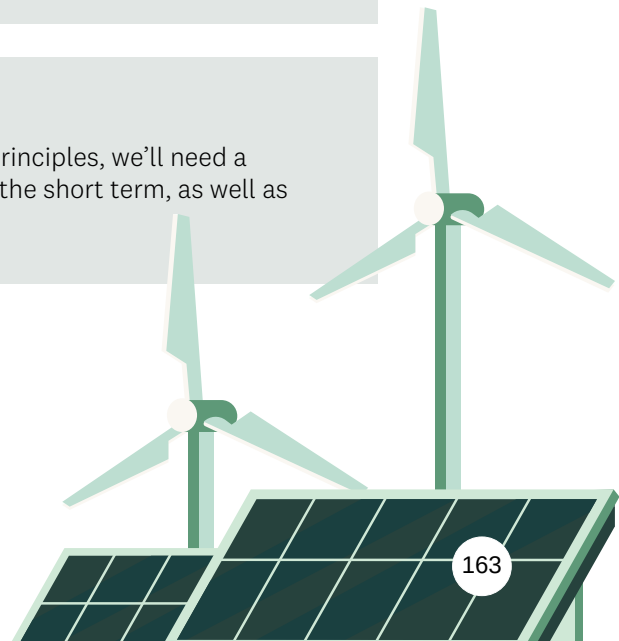
Bundling and streamlining

We'll look at how to bundle together actions and streamline how we work towards the same or similar goals.

4

Prioritising action

In alignment with the action-oriented principles, we'll need a focus on what we can get going with in the short term, as well as planning for the long-term.







WORKING DRAFT

Our Energy Future: Waitaha | Canterbury Energy Action Plan

Version 5.0 July 2026

This document is a working draft. Feedback from councils, partners, and stakeholders is continuing to inform the development of draft actions and the content of the Action Plan. Further changes will arise through this iterative process.

WORKING DRAFT

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WORKING DRAFT

Introduction

This draft Energy Action Plan builds on the Regional Energy Strategic Framework, which sets a shared direction for a more resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy system across Waitaha Canterbury. It translates that strategic direction into a coordinated programme of action, helping to deliver energy outcomes while also supporting wider community wellbeing, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability.

The Action Plan aligns with a range of related regional priorities and work programmes, including transport, climate action and emissions reduction, economic development, and spatial planning. This recognises these important interconnections and helps ensure that energy considerations are embedded across regional decision-making.

The [Canterbury Regional Energy Inventory](#) highlights the wide-reaching opportunities and challenges for the region associated with our energy transition. Key benefits of this transition include improved community health and wellbeing, making progress towards decarbonisation and climate change goals, improved energy resilience, support for existing and emerging industries, job creation, and strengthened energy workforce capability. Challenges identified include managing investment and access to capital, addressing peak capacity constraints in a changing climate, and supporting community and consumer understanding.

A reliable and resilient energy system is fundamental to achieving Canterbury's wider economic ambitions. Energy is a key enabler of the regional economy. As Canterbury's population and economy continue to grow, and the transition to a more electrified, low-emissions future accelerates, ensuring energy supply and infrastructure can meet future demand will be essential to supporting sustainable growth and maintaining regional competitiveness. This aligns with the regional aspiration identified through the [Canterbury Ambition](#) and [World Stage Ready](#) to invest ahead of demand in resilient energy infrastructure.

Many of the actions in the Action Plan build on work already underway by councils, Rūnanga, government agencies, and the private and community sectors. In this context, the role of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum is to support coordination, alignment, and amplification of these efforts, rather than to duplicate or replace them. By working collaboratively across organisations and initiatives, the region is better positioned to accelerate progress and deliver shared energy outcomes.

The Action Plan is closely aligned with the Canterbury Regional Emissions Reduction Plan, which is being progressed in parallel by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum. While the Emissions Reduction Plan has a broader scope, the two plans share important areas of focus. Together, the plans provide a coordinated approach to reducing emissions and supporting Canterbury's energy transition.

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The Waitaha | Canterbury Energy Action Plan has been developed through collaboration across local government, industry, academia, community organisations, and other stakeholders, and with valuable input from some rūnanga, helping to ensure it reflects a broad range of perspectives and expertise. The organisations below have contributed to the development of, and support the direction of, the Action Plan.



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Leadership and delivery [placeholder]

(This section will outline the proposed approach to leadership, oversight, and delivery of the Energy Action Plan. It will describe the respective roles of delivery leads, key partners, and supporting organisations.)

Consideration is currently being given to the most appropriate arrangements for regional leadership, coordination, and oversight of the Action Plan. These arrangements will be subject to further discussion and decisions by the relevant regional forums and the Canterbury Mayoral Forum. In the interim, the term "Regional Energy Entity" has been used throughout the Action Plan as a placeholder to represent the future organisation, group, or arrangement that may be established to provide regional leadership and coordination of implementation.

For many of the actions, Rūnanga may have leadership, delivery, or partnership roles, reflecting the importance of the partnership between councils and Ngāi Tahu. The specific roles and responsibilities associated with individual actions will need to be confirmed through discussions between councils and Rūnanga.)

Role of councils and partners

The transition to a more affordable, resilient and sustainable energy future will require action from many organisations and communities across Canterbury. Councils have an important role to play through the decisions they make, the services they provide, and the levers available to them, such as planning, investment, asset management, education, advocacy and community leadership.

Not all potential initiatives or activities are specifically identified as actions within this Plan. This reflects the strategic and enabling nature of the Action Plan and recognises that many opportunities will be best progressed through individual council work programmes, business-as-usual activities, sector initiatives, or future implementation. The actions within this Plan seek to complement and not duplicate the efforts of other regional partnerships, such as the work of regional transport and waste committees.

Councils and other partners can also play an important leadership role by leading by example, trialling new approaches, sharing lessons learned and supporting wider uptake across communities and businesses.

WORKING DRAFT**Evolving energy context**

This Action Plan is being developed within a rapidly changing energy context, both nationally and across Waitaha Canterbury. New Zealand is facing increasing pressure on its energy system, including electricity supply constraints during dry years, tightening gas supply, fuel price volatility, and growing concerns around fuel security linked to global oil supply disruptions. As a country reliant on imported refined fuels, these challenges have direct implications for wellbeing, transport, freight, agriculture, and broader economic resilience.

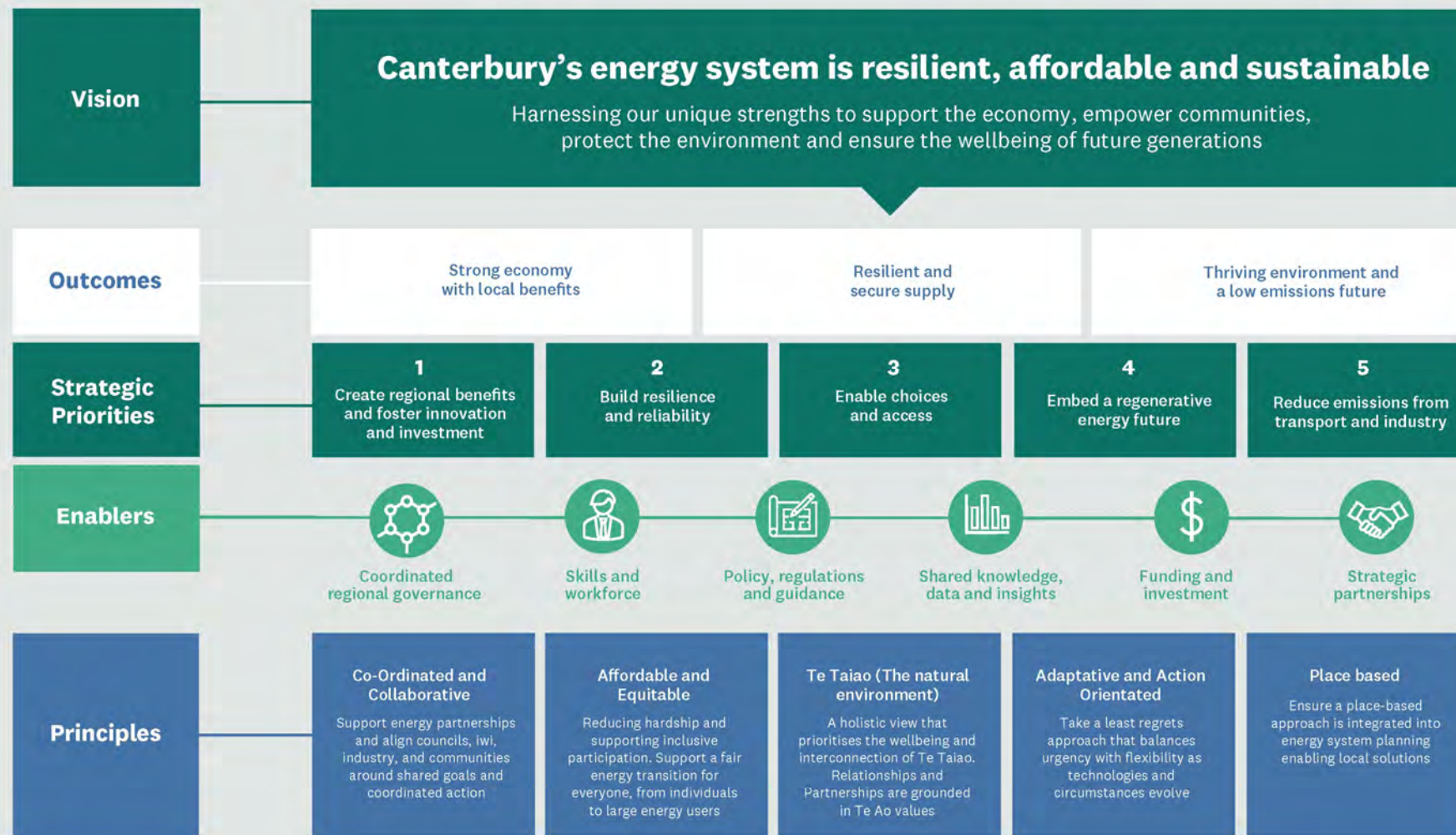
In Canterbury, these pressures are occurring alongside population growth, transport and industrial electrification, and increasing demand for reliable and affordable energy to support productivity and wellbeing. At the same time, the region has significant renewable energy resources and opportunities to lead New Zealand's transition to a low-emissions energy system.

This context reinforces the need to accelerate action to improve energy resilience, manage demand, and support local renewable energy solutions, while strengthening coordination across organisations and sectors. The Action Plan is intended to remain adaptive and responsive as priorities, technologies, and system needs continue to evolve.

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Our plan on a page – Where we're going

The Canterbury Energy Strategic Framework - plan on a page



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Strategic Outcomes

The Regional Energy Strategic Framework sets a vision for a resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy future for Canterbury. To support delivery of this vision, the Framework identifies three strategic outcomes that describe the long-term aspirations for the region's energy system.

The actions within this Energy Action Plan are intended to contribute to one or more of these outcomes. Together, these actions help progress the Strategic Framework's vision while delivering benefits for Canterbury's communities, economy, and environment. The icons shown below are used throughout the Action Plan to indicate the outcomes each action is expected to support.

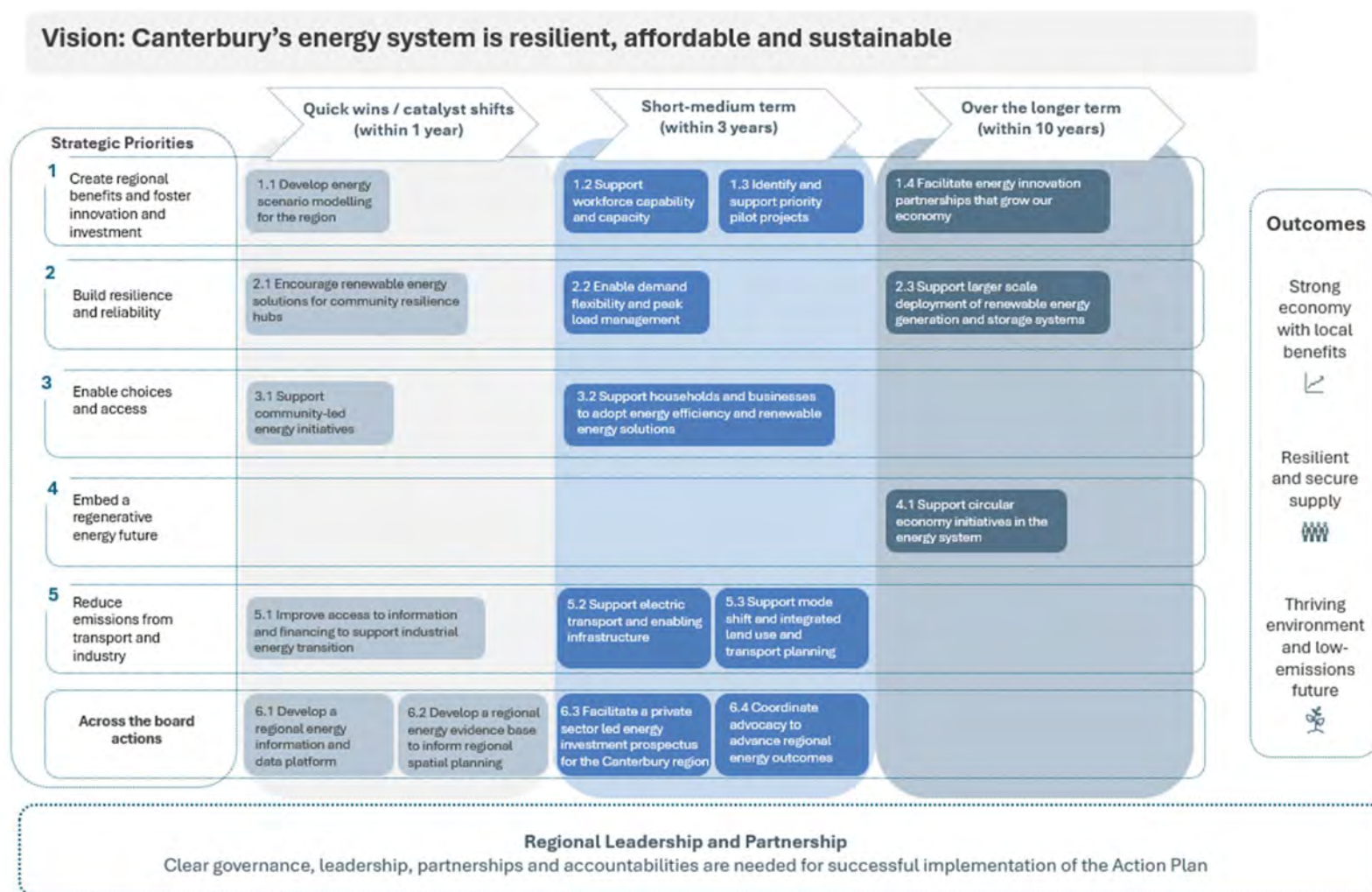
	Strong economy with local benefits	Supports economic productivity, business competitiveness, investment, innovation, workforce development, and local economic opportunities arising from Canterbury's energy transition, while also promoting affordable and equitable access to energy for households, communities, and businesses of all sizes.
	Resilient and secure supply	Supports a reliable, secure, and resilient energy system that can meet current and future needs, withstand disruptions, strengthen community wellbeing, and enable communities and businesses across Canterbury to participate in and benefit from the energy transition.
	Thriving environment and a low-emissions future	Supports the transition to a low-emissions energy system while reducing environmental impacts, improving resource efficiency, and helping to protect and enhance Canterbury's natural environment for future generations.

Energy decisions have important links to health, wellbeing, equity, and the environment. Recognising these connections can help ensure Canterbury's energy transition delivers wider co-benefits, including improved health outcomes, improved air quality, reduced emissions, and greater community wellbeing, while minimising unintended impacts.

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Overview of our actions – How we'll get there

Many of the actions identified below build on work already underway across Canterbury by councils, rūnanga, government agencies, and the private and community sectors. The role of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum is to support coordination, alignment, and amplification of these efforts, rather than to duplicate or replace them.



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Strategic Priority 1 – Create regional benefits and foster innovation and investment

What this priority means: Prioritise investment, jobs, talent pipeline and economic opportunities that keep value in Waitaha, support research, training, new technologies and smart infrastructure that drive economic opportunity and emissions reduction.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Delivery agencies / key partners (TBC)	Resourcing (TBC)	Linkages / alignment
1.1 Develop energy scenario modelling for the region Quick win / catalyst shift (within 1 year)	Undertake scenario analysis of potential energy futures for the region to support spatial, industry and emissions reduction planning that reflects the uniqueness of Canterbury. Electricity Distribution Businesses would lead this work, with initial work already underway by Orion. Over time, this could be expanded in partnership with MainPower, Alpine Energy, Network Waitaki and Electricity Ashburton to support comprehensive regional energy scenario modelling. A coordinated and collaborative approach among Electricity Distribution Businesses, in conjunction with Transpower's Te Kanapu Future Grid Blueprint, to develop and make the scenarios available more widely is essential.	Understanding possible future energy pathways is essential to support informed decision-making for infrastructure investment, spatial planning, emissions reduction, and wider economic development. It can also help identify opportunities to attract investment, support new technologies and skills, and maximise the benefits of the energy transition for Canterbury. Energy scenario modelling helps identify risks, opportunities, and trade-offs, enabling more resilient and coordinated long-term planning. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads: - Electricity Distribution Businesses - Regional Energy Entity (TBC) Key partners: - Transpower - EPE Centre - Lincoln University - Academic institutions - Local government - Iwi - Industry - Community groups	Funding opportunities: Industry-led (Transpower and Electricity Distribution Businesses)	- Action 6.2 - Action 6.3 - Regional Spatial Planning - Canterbury Regional Deal/ Investment Prospectus - Regional Emissions Reduction Plan - Transpower wider NZ Scenario Modelling - Te Kanapu Future Grid Blueprint

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1.2 Support workforce capability and capacity Short - medium term (within 3 years)	Convene stakeholders to build on existing energy workforce planning for Canterbury to encourage energy-related study, training and career opportunities to strengthen our energy sector workforce and provide a diversity of job opportunities. This includes alignment with mana whenua aspirations for pathways into energy related green jobs and opportunities connected to working on and with the whenua.	A skilled workforce is critical to the energy transition and supporting regional economic growth. Coordinated workforce planning ensures the right skills are developed at the right time, supports industry confidence, and creates quality employment opportunities. There is also an opportunity to position Canterbury as an innovative energy hub – attracting and retaining talent, strengthening pathways into energy careers, and inspiring future workforce participation through early engagement and clear communication of regional opportunities, linking industry ‘real-world’/Canterbury problems with academic projects. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads: - Electricity Distribution Businesses - EPECentre/UC - Lincoln University - Electricity Engineers Association - Academic Institutions Key partners: - Energy sector - Iwi - MBIE - Kānoa - CCHL - Economic Development Agencies	Funding opportunities: Existing industry, education and government programmes	- EEA and Energy Resources Aotearoa Re-Energise 26 – An Industry Skills Action Plan Aruhiko Power Engineering Excellence Trust – hosted by the EPECentre at University of Canterbury - Existing apprenticeship and training programmes
1.3 Identify and support priority pilot projects	Select a small number of cross-sector projects to test and demonstrate approaches, including consideration of scalability.	Pilot projects provide a practical way to test, refine, and demonstrate new approaches before wider rollout. They help reduce delivery risk, build	Key leads: Regional Energy Entity (TBC) Key partners:	Funding opportunities: Mixed (private, government and	- Action 1.4 - Action 2.1 - Action 3.1

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Short - medium term (within 3 years)	This could include: • Energy efficiency and flexibility • Renewable energy • Transport Where there are pilot projects already underway case studies could be shared through this forum to support shared learning. Identify or establish a collaborative group to coordinate the identification, assessment and selection of new and existing pilot projects, and to determine the type of support that could be provided.	evidence of what works, and enable scalable solutions that can accelerate system-wide change. Small, practical demonstration projects can also unlock wider system change by accelerating partnerships, investment, and market confidence. Alignment to outcomes 	• Private sector • Energy sector organisations • Industry • Local government • Academic Institutions • Lincoln University • EPECentre • Central government • Electricity Distribution Businesses • Community groups	partner investment)	• Christchurch International Airport energy transition initiatives • Collaborative energy hub concepts • EECA demonstration programmes
1.4 Facilitate energy innovation partnerships that grow our economy Over the longer term (within 10 years)	Facilitate and build on partnerships between private, public and community sectors to accelerate and invest in energy innovation that would benefit the region. This could include a focus on trialling emerging energy technologies, drawing on local, national, and global expertise and positioning the region as a testbed for innovation to accelerate decarbonisation and	Collaboration across industry, government, communities, and the finance sector is key to accelerating innovation and investment in the energy system. Strong partnerships help share risk, unlock new solutions, and ensure the benefits of energy development are realised locally and more equitably across the region. Partnerships can support and strengthen more resilient, adaptive energy systems that	Potential key leads: • Regional Energy Entity (TBC) • Industry • Energy sector Potential key partners: • Local government • Iwi	Funding opportunities: Mixed (private, government and partner investment)	• Central Government goals around economic growth and partnerships • ChristchurchNZ CleanTech Cluster • European International Urban and Regional Collaboration

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	the transition to a low-emissions energy system. Support iwi-led and iwi-partnered renewable energy initiatives.	deliver long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits. Alignment to outcomes 	• Electricity Distribution Businesses • EPECentre • Community groups • Economic Development Agencies		• New Zealand Hydrogen Aviation Consortium • University of Canterbury Sustainable Energy Research Group
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Strategic Priority 2 – Build Resilience and Reliability

What this priority means: Invest in infrastructure, innovation and smarter networks to ensure Waitaha Canterbury's energy system is diverse, secure, flexible and future-ready. Consider the energy needs for adaptation and resilience hubs, marae, and other critical facilities that support community response and recovery.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Delivery agencies / key partners (TBC)	Resourcing (TBC)	Linkages / alignment
2.1 Encourage renewable energy solutions for community resilience hubs Quick win / catalyst shift (within 1 year)	Encourage the investigation and implementation of renewable and resilient energy solutions at community resilience hubs, such as solar energy, battery storage, Electric Vehicles and other technologies that can help maintain essential services during emergencies and power outages. This may include identifying opportunities, sharing examples of successful projects, and connecting organisations with relevant expertise, funding opportunities, and technical guidance. Identify and build on existing guidance, tools, case studies and lessons learnt to enable others to adopt energy resilient solutions that meet local needs, prioritising key identified communities and groups. This includes recognising the important role that resilient	Communities are increasingly exposed to power outages and disruptions from extreme weather and emergencies, with many facilities unable to operate independently during these events. Developing solar- and battery-powered resilience hubs helps maintain essential services, strengthens local preparedness, and aligns with national emergency management priorities. Engaging with communities and groups who are particularly vulnerable, to understand what sort of energy is most useful/feasible for the community is important to facilitate an equitable energy transition.	Key leads: - Local government - Civil defence / emergency management teams - Canterbury Lifelines Utilities Group - Community groups Key partners: - EPECentre - Climate or sustainability groups - Iwi - Electricity Distribution Businesses	Funding opportunities: Mixed funding (local government, Central Government, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA), grants, community investment)	- Action 2.2 - National Adaptation Plan - Central Government funding programmes (e.g. EECA Solar on Schools programme) - Council installation of solar on community facilities in Christchurch District - Canterbury civil defence and emergency

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	energy solutions can play in supporting critical facilities, lifeline infrastructure, and essential services during emergencies.	Alignment to outcomes 	Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ)		management group Regional risk identification
2.2 Enable demand flexibility and peak load management Short - medium term (within 3 years)	Enable greater flexibility in how and when energy is used, including by: - supporting the uptake of smart technologies - working with energy providers and industry to better match energy supply with demand - expanding demand management responses, including time-of-use programmes and incentives - Exploring how distributed energy resources such as solar, batteries and electric vehicles can contribute to a more flexible, resilient and lower-emissions energy system.	Supporting demand flexibility helps reduce pressure on the electricity system during peak periods, improves energy security, and can defer or avoid the need for costly network upgrades. It also enables greater use of renewable energy by better aligning demand with supply, while helping households and businesses manage energy costs. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads: - Electricity Distribution Businesses Key partners: - Industry, communities and households - EECA - Transpower - Electricity Authority - Commerce Commission - MBIE - FlexForum - Electrify Christchurch	Funding opportunities: Primarily industry and programme-led (Electricity Distribution Businesses, retailers, EECA and private investment)	- EECA's Demand Flexibility work - Electricity Authority Standardised Demand Flexibility - EECA Energy Audits
2.3 Support larger scale deployment of renewable energy generation and storage systems	Support the development of larger-scale renewable energy generation and energy storage across Canterbury by helping to improve investment readiness and reduce barriers to delivery.	Canterbury's energy system is vulnerable to outages and can be slow to recover from disruptions. Expanding renewable energy generation and storage enables more local generation and	Key leads: Regional Energy Entity (tbc)	Funding opportunities: Predominantly privately funded and industry-led, with	- Action 1.1 - Action 2.1 - Action 3.1 - Action 2.3 - Action 6.3

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Over the longer term (within 10 years)	This includes working with partners to identify priority opportunities through spatial planning and demand forecasting, supporting more coordinated and efficient consenting pathways where possible, and improving the visibility of regional opportunities. It also involves facilitating connections between developers, landowners, iwi, councils, and network operators to help progress viable projects. This would include consideration of network resilience, redundancy, distributed energy resources and alternative supply pathways to strengthen energy security and system flexibility.	backup supply, reducing reliance on a central grid and helping businesses, homes, and community facilities to maintain power during outages and peak demand periods. Alignment to outcomes 	Local government Key partners: • Energy solution providers EPECentre • Electricity Distribution Businesses • Local government • Businesses Community groups • Transpower • EECA • Electricity Authority	opportunities for government co-funding (including research funding programmes).	• Regional spatial planning • NPS – Renewable Electricity Generation • RMA / National Planning Act • Ratepayer Assistance Scheme • EECA co-funding opportunities
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Strategic Priority 3 – Enable choices and access

What this priority means: Empower communities, businesses, iwi and individuals through energy education and partnerships so everyone can participate in and benefit from an affordable, sustainable energy system – with expanded energy options and local energy initiatives.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Delivery agencies / key partners (TBC)	Resourcing (TBC)	Linkages/ alignment
3.1 Support community-led energy initiatives Quick win / catalyst shift (within 1 year)	Identify opportunities and share knowledge, case studies and learnings. Facilitate partnerships between communities, councils, iwi, energy providers, and investors which unlock community values, strengthen community agency and ownership, and support broader community health and wellbeing outcomes. Focus areas to include: • Resilience • Affordability, equity and hardship • Energy literacy and capacity building • Funding and financing pathways	Community energy initiatives can reduce costs, improve resilience, and keep benefits local, but communities often face regulatory, technical, and funding barriers. Strong interest exists, yet coordination and support are limited. Addressing these challenges will require greater participation, increased local renewable generation, and stronger iwi and community involvement. There is also an opportunity to explore enabling mechanisms and governance models that support community ownership and stewardship of local energy initiatives. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads • Community groups • Local government Key partners • Iwi / Māori • Electricity Distribution Businesses • Energy providers • Lincoln University • EPECentre/UC • Community organisations and service providers • Climate Navigator	Funding opportunities: Community, philanthropic, government and private funding sources	• Action 3.2 • Electrify Christchurch, Electrify Castle Hill, Lyttelton Energy Transition Society, Community Energy Network • EECA community funding opportunities

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3.2 Support households and businesses to adopt energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions Short - medium term (within 3 years)	Provide tailored advice, and support to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy costs, and to adopt sustainable energy practices across homes, papakāinga, marae, farms, and commercial and industrial buildings, with a focus on affordable and achievable solutions. This could include: • Practical guidance and navigation support to help people access energy efficiency and electrification options, including available funding and financing opportunities • Simple tools to help understand costs, benefits, and return on investment • Partnering with social service providers, marae and industry to reach more communities.	Energy efficiency initiatives supported by better information, independent advice, and coordinated services can improve how households, small businesses and farms use energy, reduce costs, and support more equitable access to energy choices. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads • Regional Energy Entity (TBC) • Community groups Key partners • Local government • EECA • Academic institutions • Social service providers • EPECentre/UC • Industry/Lobby and Advocacy Groups • Housing providers • Electricity Distribution Businesses	Funding opportunities: Government programmes, utility initiatives, private finance and existing support schemes	• Action 6.4 • EECA, Rewiring Aotearoa, • Electrify Christchurch, Lyttelton Energy Transition Society, Community Energy Network • Ratepayers Assistance Scheme • Canterbury Emissions Reduction Plan, • MBIE Energy Efficiency Regulations and standards
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Strategic Priority 4 – Embed a regenerative energy future

What this priority means: Ensure energy choices safeguard the environment, restore ecosystems, reduce waste, and strengthen the circular economy with the right balance of sustainability and te taiao (the natural environment) to enable sustainable and healthy options for future generations.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Delivery agencies / key partners (TBC)	Resourcing (TBC)	Linkages/ alignment
4.1 Support circular economy initiatives in the energy system Over the longer term (within 10 years)	Promote recycling and circular approaches for renewable energy technologies (e.g., solar panels, batteries). Support and advocate for waste collection and management practices that maximise the beneficial use of organic waste for bioenergy.	Energy technologies have increasing material and environmental impacts across their lifecycle, including extraction, manufacturing, and end-of-life waste. Supporting circular economy initiatives helps reduce this footprint by promoting reuse, repair, recycling, and the beneficial use of resources, including organic waste streams for bioenergy. It also creates opportunities for new circular business models and local economic activity, while contributing to lower emissions and a more sustainable, regenerative energy system. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads - Local government - Industry - Waste and recycling operators - Regional Energy Entity (TBC) Key partners - Energy sector - Academic Institutions - Iwi - Community groups - WasteMINZ - Industry	Funding opportunities: Central Government, industry investment, research partnerships and circular economy funding streams	- Government waste and resource work programme - Product Stewardship Regulations - Bioenergy Association of New Zealand - Commercial bioenergy production from organic residues - Christchurch Ecogas and biomass drying facility

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Strategic Priority 5 – Reduce emissions from transport and industry

What this priority means: Accelerate the transition of transport and industry to low emission energy through multiple energy options, efficiency measures and support for innovation and investment.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Delivery agencies / key partners (TBC)	Resourcing (TBC)	Linkages/ alignment
5.1 Improve access to information and financing to support industrial energy transition Quick win / catalyst shift (within 1 year)	Work with industry to: 1. Understand opportunities and barriers for energy efficiency, electrification, and fuel switching. 2. Connect with funding and financing opportunities to support industrial energy transition.	Industry needs clearer pathways and support to reduce emissions and improve efficiency. Better access to information, tools, and co-investment opportunities can accelerate electrification and fuel switching, and improve competitiveness. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads • Regional Energy Entity (TBC) Key partners • EECA • NZTE • Industry • Energy sector • Local government • Central government • Sustainable Business Council • EPECentre/UC • NZTA Waka Kotahi	Funding opportunities: EECA co-funding, government transition programmes, private finance and industry investment	• Canterbury Emissions Reduction Plan • EECA – co-funding opportunities • EECA – Regional Energy Transition Accelerator • Gas Transition Loan Guarantee Scheme • Transport and infrastructure planning and regulations
5.2 Support electric transport	Work with councils, transport agencies, network providers and	A reliable and accessible charging network, alongside	Key leads	Funding opportunities:	• Alignment with initiatives

WORKING DRAFT

and enabling infrastructure Short - medium term (within 3 years)	industry to support electric modes of transport and the required infrastructure through coordinated planning, investment, and collaboration. This includes identifying barriers and opportunities, supporting the deployment of charging infrastructure, and enabling electrification across passenger, public and freight transport, particularly in underserved areas and along key corridors.	other enabling measures, is essential to support the transition to electric transport. Coordinated planning, rollout of charging infrastructure, and network capacity improvements can help remove barriers to uptake, improve equitable access across urban and rural areas, and supports efficient use of infrastructure investment. Alignment to outcomes 	• Local government • ChargeNet • Meridian Energy Key partners • Industry • Electricity Distribution Businesses • Charging infrastructure providers • Public transport and freight operators • EECA • NZTA Waka Kotahi • EPECentre/UC	National infrastructure funding, private investment, charging provider investment and co-funding opportunities	and policies set by, MoT, NZTA, MCERT and EECA • National Infrastructure Funding and Financing / ChargeNet / Meridian national rollout of new charging points • Canterbury Emissions Reduction Plan
5.3 Support mode shift and integrated land use and transport planning Short - medium term (within 3 years)	Support initiatives that enable mode shift and improve transport efficiency for passenger and freight transport, aligned with land use planning and growth strategies. Such initiatives include: • Public transport frequency, reliability and customer experience uplift (including on-demand public transport)	Reducing reliance on private vehicles through better transport choices and integrated planning can lower emissions, ease congestion, improve health outcomes and reduce costs. Freight transport is also an important part of the transport energy transition. Aligning transport and land use supports more sustainable, efficient, and connected communities.	Key leads • Local government Key partners • Lincoln University • EPECentre/UC • Community groups	Funding opportunities: Existing transport investment programmes, local and central government funding mechanisms, developer-funded	• National level RMA/LTMA and proposed planning act • Regional Spatial Planning • Regional Land Transport Plan

WORKING DRAFT

	• Integrated land use and transport planning • Travel demand management • Consideration of freight movement and opportunities to support more efficient, lower-emissions freight transport This action recognises and seeks to build on the significant transport, land use and growth planning work already underway across the region.	Alignment to outcomes 	• Central government • Property developers • NZTA Waka Kotahi	infrastructure and design measures integrated through new development and growth areas.	• Regional Public Transport Plan
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WORKING DRAFT

Across the board

The table below identifies key cross-cutting actions that contribute to multiple strategic priorities across the Regional Energy Strategic Framework. The actions below support the delivery of many actions within this Action Plan.

Action	What this involves	Why this matters	Delivery agencies / key partners (TBC)	Resourcing (TBC)	Linkages/ alignment
6.1 Develop a regional energy information and data platform Quick win / catalyst shift (within 1 year)	Develop a regional approach to improving the availability, quality, and accessibility of energy information and data across Canterbury. This includes establishing an online platform providing trusted energy information, guidance, tools, resources, including case studies, best practice examples and lessons learnt. It also includes working with regional and national partners to strengthen the regional energy evidence base and monitoring to support planning and investment decisions.	This would improve access to consistent and reliable energy information and regional energy insights, reduce duplication, support evidence-based decision-making, and enable informed energy decisions across communities, industry and organisations. A stronger regional energy evidence base would also support energy scenario modelling, transport and land use planning, demand flexibility initiatives, investment decisions, and provide the foundation for monitoring progress against the Regional Energy Action Plan over time. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads - Regional Energy Entity - Lincoln University - University of Canterbury Key partners - All stakeholders - National data agencies	Funding opportunities: Local and central government funding, partner contributions and co-investment opportunities	Other regional and national data platforms

WORKING DRAFT

6.2 Develop a regional energy evidence base to inform regional spatial planning Quick win / catalyst shift (within 1 year)	Identify the spatial data needed for regional spatial planning, review existing datasets to find gaps, and consider approaches to integrate energy planning through regional spatial planning processes. This could include mapping of critical energy infrastructure, network vulnerabilities, and other resilience considerations.	Robust, consistent energy data is essential to support effective spatial planning and infrastructure decisions. A shared evidence base helps align land use and energy planning, identify future constraints and opportunities, and enable more efficient, coordinated regional growth and investment decisions. Mechanisms such as Renewable Energy Zones can help to foster investment in renewable energy where appropriate. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads - Local government Key partners - Energy sector - Electricity Distribution Businesses - Transpower - Canterbury LifeLines Utilities Group	Funding opportunities: Local government investment, research partnerships and government funding programmes	- Regional and District Plans - Regional risk identification using Resilience Explorer - Action 2.3
6.3 Facilitate a private sector led energy investment prospectus for the Canterbury region Short - medium term (within 3 years)	Support the development of a private sector-led investment prospectus identifying priority regional energy projects, using council and regional data to strengthen market visibility and investor confidence, and attract investment, jobs and innovation. Ensure key information is publicly available online to support access by domestic and international developers and investors, and to strengthen	Clear, coordinated investment signals are critical to unlocking private sector confidence and capital in the energy transition. A regional investment prospectus can help prioritise opportunities, reduce uncertainty, and accelerate delivery of key energy projects that support regional growth and resilience.	Key leads - Industry - Regional Energy Entity (TBC) Key partners - Industry - Energy sector partners – (Transpower, Generators, Electricity	Funding opportunities: Industry investment, regional economic development funding and partner contributions	- Canterbury Regional Deal / Investment Prospectus - World Stage Ready – Canterbury - Canterbury Ambition - South Canterbury Renewable

WORKING DRAFT

	Canterbury's positioning as a centre for energy innovation and investment.	Alignment to outcomes 	Distribution Businesses) • MBIE • Academic Institutes		Energy Prospectus (draft)
6.4 Coordinate advocacy to advance regional energy outcomes Short - medium term (within 3 years)	Coordinate advocacy and submissions on agreed priorities and promotion of policies that would advance energy outcomes for Canterbury. This could also help unlock funding and investment opportunities. Bring together interested groups, including community. Strengthen relationships with national agencies and regulators.	This ensures that the Canterbury voice is considered and the regional position is put forward to contribute to national level policy making and policy and funding and investment decisions that affect the region. Alignment to outcomes 	Key leads • Regional Energy Entity (TBC) • Local government • Industry • Electricity Distribution Businesses Key partners • Industry associations, Major energy users, Community groups • Canterbury Lifelines Utility Group • Academic Institutions	Funding opportunities: Existing organisational budgets and partner contributions	• Canterbury Emissions Reduction Plan

WORKING DRAFT

Case studies will be included to highlight some of the work already underway across organisations, communities, and partners showing implementation in practice and what this could look like in a Canterbury context. We welcome suggestions for examples.

WORKING DRAFT

What happens next?

The actions outlined in this plan provide a strong foundation for delivery, but they are not exhaustive. As implementation progresses, there will be opportunities to refine, expand, and adapt actions in response to emerging priorities, new technologies, policy changes, and evolving regional needs.

The next stage will involve partners working together to confirm the scope and approach for each action, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify the resources and funding needed to support delivery. Building on the work already captured in this Action Plan, this process will help ensure actions remain practical, achievable, and responsive to opportunities and changing needs across the region.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Energy Action Plan will focus on tracking progress against agreed actions, outcomes, and broader system impacts over time. A light-touch but structured approach will be used, drawing on a mix of quantitative indicators (such as energy investment, uptake of renewable technologies, emissions reduction, and infrastructure delivery) and qualitative insights from stakeholders.

Annual reporting will be used to highlight progress, emerging issues, and opportunities for adjustment, with periodic three-yearly reviews to assess progress towards the Strategic Framework vision and outcomes, review the continued relevance of priorities and actions, and identify any changes required in response to emerging opportunities and challenges. These reviews will also provide an opportunity to ensure the Action Plan remains effective and deliverable in an evolving policy, technology, and investment environment, and in the context of significant changes to local and central government roles and responsibilities.

A regional approach to energy needs clear leadership and accountability

Stakeholders consistently highlight the need for a clear governance structure to ensure successful delivery of the regional action plan. While actions may be led by different organisations, overall leadership and governance is essential to provide strategic oversight, coordination and accountability of the work.

Governance

Benefits

Considerations

Delivery

1	2	3
Status Quo - Canterbury Mayoral Forum Oversight	Expanded Regional Energy Governance Group	Regional Trust Model
Overall governance accountability is held within the existing structure of Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Economic Development Forum and the Steering Group	Expand the existing Steering Group membership to include other regional members representing industry, community voice, central govt, energy sector, mana whenua etc.	Establish a regional trust governed by an independent board representing relevant sectors and organisations. The trust would operate as a separate legal entity, independent of existing local government governance arrangements.
✓ Builds on existing regional governance arrangements. ✓ Provides clear accountability through elected members. ✓ Can be implemented with minimal additional governance or administrative requirements. ✓ Maintains strong alignment with other regional priorities and work programmes.	✓ Dedicated focus on implementation and delivery. ✓ Strengthens collaboration and ownership. ✓ Brings together those with the ability to influence and deliver actions. ✓ Increases access to potential funding, in-kind support and expertise. ✓ Retains Mayoral Forum and regional decision-making processes. ✓ Supports coordinated regional advocacy and investment opportunities.	✓ Independent, region-wide governance structure. ✓ Better positioned to attract external funding or investments ✓ Flexible model to establish partnerships, commission work, employ staff, and asset ownership ✓ Can provide continuity beyond local government electoral cycles.
✗ Limited involvement of key delivery partners in governance and decision making. ✗ Less suited to overseeing complex, long-term programme of work from multiple organisations and sectors. ✗ Could be affected by local government reforms. ✗ Implementation likely to focus on council-led actions	✗ Requires agreement on membership, decision-making arrangements, and resourcing. ✗ May require additional administrative and coordination support. ✗ Clear accountability and reporting arrangements required. ✗ Staffing and delivery functions would need to be done through individual partners.	✗ More complex and resource intensive to establish ✗ Requires dedicated governance, administration, and funding ✗ Admin heavy to set up clear accountability and reporting relationships with Mayoral Forum and participating organisations ✗ May be more appropriate where there is a desire for a dedicated delivery organisation rather than a coordination only function

Each option relies on a dedicated operational team to support governance, leadership and delivery. Resourcing needs will vary by model, but a mix of in-kind resourcing, philanthropic contributions and funding is likely to be needed.

\$ Lower

\$\$ Mid

Higher \$\$\$

Potential Staged Approach

June to Dec 2026

Status Quo remains in place with existing Steering Group and Canterbury Mayoral Forum oversight continuing. This allows for implementation of the Action Plan to commence.

Jan 2027 to May 2028

Existing Energy Steering Group is expanded with additional members joining. Careful consideration can be given to what capabilities, expertise and resources are required to progress priority actions.

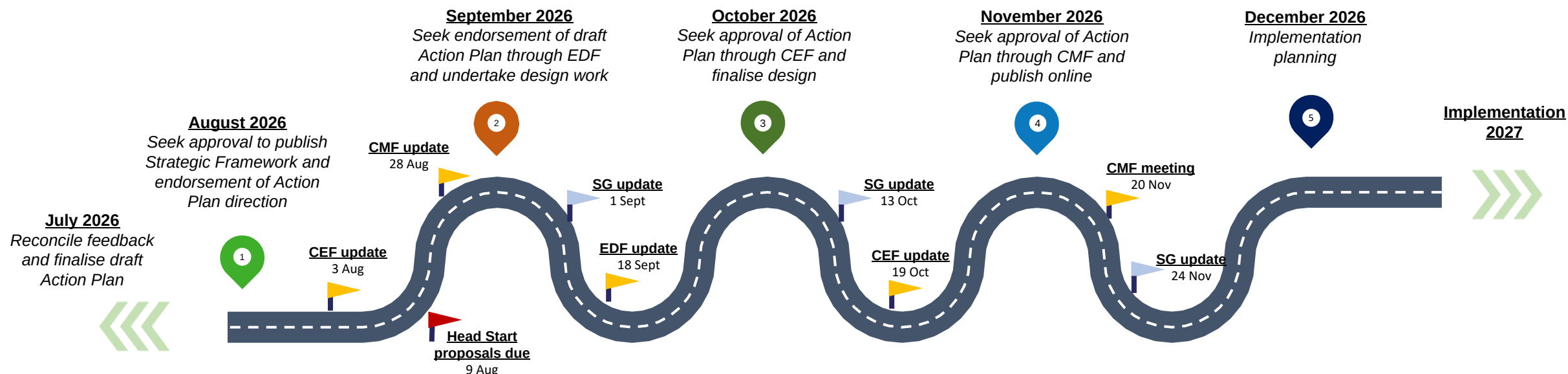


May 2028 – Local Government Reforms

Potential membership

- Economic Development Agencies
- Local Government
- Energy sector (EDBs)
- Industry
- Academics
- Community Groups
- Mana whenua
- Central Govt

Regional Energy Workstream Key Milestones: July-December 2026



Major project phases

- ★ Governance and leadership arrangements and resourcing to be confirmed July – Sept 2026
- ★ Monitoring and reporting framework to be scoped July – Nov 2026
- ★ Ongoing conversations and engagement with mana whenua – Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities and Rūnanga

Key areas of alignment with other work

- ◆ Regional Spatial Planning
- ◆ Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Emissions Reduction work (Action 2)
- ◆ Future regional deal/investment prospectus

Legend

- SG – Regional Energy Steering Group
- EDF – Economic Development forum
- CEF – Chief Executives Forum
- CMF – Canterbury Mayoral Forum
- Headstart – Part of the proposed Local Government Reforms

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Dr Deon Swiggs, Chair Canterbury Regional Council
Leigh Griffiths – General Manager Hazards, Canterbury Regional Council

Before the Deluge 3.0

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on the recently refreshed *Before the Deluge 3.0* business case and seeks endorsement to use it to support regional and national advocacy for permanent Crown co-investment in flood resilience.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **notes that Te Uru Kahika has released an updated *Before the Deluge 3.0* business case for long-term Crown co-investment in national flood risk resilience**
2. **notes that the refreshed business case now includes operational expenditure as well as capital investment, and updated project information from regional and unitary councils**
3. **endorses the use of the updated *Before the Deluge 3.0* business case as a common evidence base to support regional and national advocacy for a permanent Crown-council co-investment framework for flood resilience.**

Key points

2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) has a key action in the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 to continue to advocate for enduring Central Government co-investment in river and flood management.
3. The refreshed business case, *Before the Deluge 3.0*, (Attachment 1) should therefore be treated as an update and an advocacy tool, rather than a request for the Mayoral Forum to revisit the underlying rationale in detail.
4. The business case has been refreshed to ensure the sector has current, consistent material to support discussions about moving from periodic tranches of funding to a permanent co-investment approach. The immediate opportunity for the Mayoral Forum and councils is to use the business case in their own conversations with Ministers, officials, political candidates, and local stakeholders, supported by the same national evidence base and investment proposition.

5. *Before the Deluge 3.0* seeks a long-term Crown commitment of \$240 million per annum, alongside \$160 million per annum from regional and unitary councils, for a total annual investment of around \$400 million.
6. The updated business case explicitly includes operational expenditure as well as capital investment, recognising that maintenance, river management and depreciation are central to the performance of flood resilience schemes.
7. It also refreshes project information, including the next proposed tranche of 30 projects (tranche three) with a total value of \$370.62 million, using the established 60/40 Crown-council co-investment approach.

Background

8. Flooding is Aotearoa New Zealand's most common natural hazard, with around 750,000 people living in flood-prone areas. There are 367 flood resilience schemes nationally, with annual benefits from these schemes estimated at \$11 billion and a benefit-cost ratio of at least 5:1.
9. Flood resilience infrastructure is the first line of defence for much of New Zealand's infrastructure. It protects people, homes, businesses, productive land, transport links, pipes, bridges, schools, hospitals and other assets that underpin economic activity and community wellbeing. As a result, flood resilience is increasingly being recognised as a national infrastructure issue. The National Infrastructure Plan identifies flooding and severe weather as a growing challenge over coming decades and highlights the need for investment that improves infrastructure and community resilience.
10. Te Uru Kahika first presented *Before the Deluge* in 2022 as the business case for co-investment in national flood risk resilience. Since then, the Crown and the regional sector have agreed to co-fund multiple tranches of co-investment in flood resilience.
11. Recent Crown-council co-investment has shown the value of this approach. Long-delayed projects have been accelerated, and upgraded flood resilience assets have performed during recent severe weather events. The success of these co-investment programmes means the key policy question is no longer whether co-investment should occur, but how it can be embedded as a permanent national approach to flood resilience.

What has changed in the updated business case

Permanent co-investment in flood resilience

12. The updated business case has been refreshed to support discussions about permanent central government co-investment. It builds on the existing co-investment model and sets out a proposed long-term national pipeline for flood resilience infrastructure. This approach is a permanent version of the investment-sharing approach already used through recent co-investments (tranches one and two), recognising that stable, long-term

Crown-council partnership will provide greater certainty than the periodic funding tranches used to date.

13. There is a strategic risk in continuing with intermittent funding rather than a predictable long-term pipeline. Stop-start funding increases costs, erodes capability, delays projects, encourages reactive investment, and reduces confidence for councils, contractors and communities.
14. The Crown is a major beneficiary of flood resilience investment and a major bearer of the costs when resilience is inadequate. Without sufficient investment in risk reduction, central government remains exposed to escalating recovery costs, damage to Crown-owned infrastructure, insurer-of-last-resort pressures, long-term social and economic disruption, and longer-term fiscal impacts following significant events.
15. Sustained investment in flood resilience also supports the continued availability and affordability of insurance. The business case notes growing evidence of increasing premiums and insurance retreat in some locations. Reducing flood risk at source is likely to be more effective and affordable than managing the downstream consequences of reduced insurance availability. Without continued investment, a greater share of flood-related costs and liabilities may ultimately fall back on communities and the Crown.

Proposed approach to prioritising investment

16. Regional Councils, through Te Uru Kahika, propose a move from one-off funding rounds to a permanent co-investment partnership between central and local government. This would continue the current 60/40 Crown-council co-investment model. The updated business case seeks a Crown commitment of \$240 million per annum, alongside \$160 million per annum from regional and unitary councils, creating a long-term average annual programme of around \$400 million in 2026 dollars.
17. Permanent co-investment aligns with broader national infrastructure planning processes, including the National Infrastructure Plan, which emphasises long-term planning, infrastructure resilience, asset stewardship, and prioritisation of investment.
18. The recommended approach to prioritising projects builds on the mechanisms developed through multiple tranches of co-investment via the Regional Infrastructure Fund, and establishes enduring arrangements for joint investment planning, prioritisation, monitoring, and delivery:
 - **Three-yearly statements:** The Government publishes a three-yearly policy and prioritisation statement, potentially as part of updates to the National Infrastructure Plan
 - **Project prioritisation:** Regional and unitary councils respond to the policy statement by providing a prioritised national list of flood resilience investments, including the cost-benefit assessment for each project

- **Agreed pipeline:** The pipeline of prioritised projects is agreed between the government and councils, and co-investment milestones and drawdowns are agreed on an annual basis as part of normal Budget processes
 - **Oversight and monitoring:** Oversight and monitoring is provided by a responsible government agency, with progress reporting provided by councils.
19. Investment would be prioritised through a nationally consistent approach based on flood risk, likely consequences, the value of assets and infrastructure protected, impacts on people and communities, and the expected benefits of investment. Projects would continue to be supported by cost-benefit assessment and would be prioritised through a national pipeline using the Flood Resilience Investment Prioritisation Platform (FRIPP) – which is currently being developed by regional and unitary councils to support nationally consistent investment decisions.
20. The business case refreshes information on the next proposed tranche of projects. It identifies 30 priority projects (tranche three) with a total value of \$370.62 million, including proposed Crown investment of \$222.37 million and council investment of \$148.25 million under the existing 60/40 co-investment approach.
21. The proposed projects are intended to begin the shift from addressing historic infrastructure deficits toward a longer-term programme of strategic investment. The focus is increasingly on proactive investment that reduces future risk, rather than responding to immediate infrastructure shortfalls. Collectively, they are expected to protect more than 200,000 people, 960 square kilometres of urban and productive land, and assets with a replacement value of approximately \$67.9 billion. The projects would also protect significant transport, water and utility infrastructure across the country.

Operational expenditure is now included

22. One of the most significant changes in *Before the Deluge 3.0* is the explicit recognition that flood resilience depends on both operational and capital investment. Maintaining rivers, managing vegetation and gravel, operating assets, undertaking repairs and funding depreciation are all essential to the performance of flood resilience schemes and, in many years, cost more than capital investment itself.
23. Operating costs often exceed capital costs in most financial years and cannot generally be debt funded. If operational expenditure is left outside the co-investment model, a significant part of the national resilience task remains as an annual rates pressure.
24. Councils generally cannot borrow to fund operating expenditure. Operational expenditure must be met in the year it is incurred, meaning these costs fall directly on annual budgets and rates. Without a Crown contribution to operational costs, ratepayers continue to carry much of the ongoing cost of maintaining infrastructure that delivers significant national benefits.

Cost, compliance and communication

Financial implications

- 25. The business case proposes a long-term average annual investment of around \$400 million, with \$240 million from the Crown and \$160 million from councils.
- 26. Any council decision to support specific local projects, funding contributions or formal advocacy positions would still need to be considered through the relevant council process, including Long Term Plan processes where applicable.
- 27. The Business Case will be updated again in 2027 with updated financial information/projects once 30 Year Infrastructure Strategies have been completed as part of Long Term Plan processes.

Risk assessment and legal compliance

- 28. There are no legal implications from this paper. Flood resilience sits within a complex legislative environment, and councils are already required to plan, fund, and manage flood assets through long-term, sustainable decision-making.

Communication

- 29. The Mayoral Forum and councils can use the updated business case as a common basis for advocacy with Ministers, officials, candidates, and local stakeholders. This could include emphasising the refreshed \$400 million annual investment proposition, the inclusion of operational expenditure, the updated tranche three project list, and the need for a permanent co-investment framework.
- 30. The value for councils is that it provides the sector with a common evidence base and shared investment proposition, while still allowing each council to explain its local and regional risks, projects, and priorities.
- 31. To ensure consistent messaging across the sector, a communications and engagement strategy, including key messages on the advocacy for the permanent pipeline, is being developed by Te Uru Kahika and will be shared with councils shortly.

Next steps

- 32. Subject to the Mayoral Forum's discussion, the next step is for the Mayoral Forum, and councils, to consider how they wish to use the refreshed business case in their own advocacy.
- 33. Te Uru Kahika will continue discussions with Ministers and officials on the prioritisation approach, funding criteria, responsible agencies, legislative support if required, and other implementation matters.

Attachment

- **Attachment 1** - Before the Deluge 3.0: Taking the long view of flood risk resilience in Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Uru Kahika, 24 July 2026.

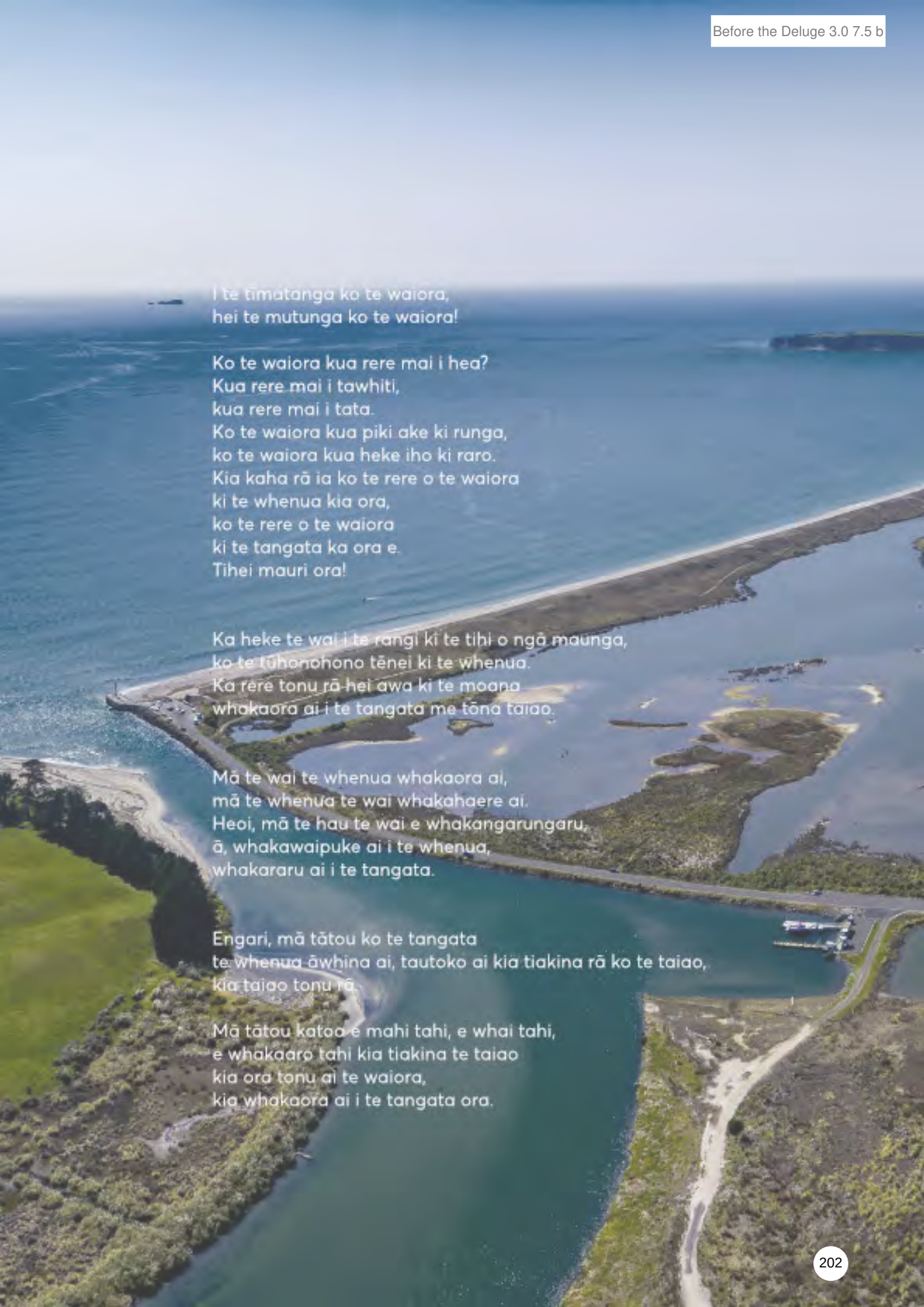
BEFORE THE DELUGE | 3.0

Taking the long view of flood risk resilience
in Aotearoa New Zealand



Regional and
Unitary Councils
Aotearoa

Version 1.0 | 24 July 2026



I te timatanga ko te waiora,
hei te mutunga ko te waiora!

Ko te waiora kua rere mai i hea?
Kua rere mai i tawhiti,
kua rere mai i tata.
Ko te waiora kua piki ake ki runga,
ko te waiora kua heke iho ki raro.
Kia kaha rā ia ko te rere o te waiora
ki te whenua kia ora,
ko te rere o te waiora
ki te tangata ka ora e.
Tihei mauri ora!

Ka heke te wai i te rangi ki te tihī o ngā maunga,
ko te tūhonohono tēnei ki te whenua.
Ka rere tonu rā hei awa ki te moana
whakaora ai i te tangata me tōna taiao.

Mā te wai te whenua whakaora ai,
mā te whenua te wai whakahaere ai.
Heoi, mā te hau te wai e whakangarungaru,
ā, whakawaipuke ai i te whenua,
whakararu ai i te tangata.

Engari, mā tātou ko te tangata
te whenua āwhina ai, tautoko ai kia tiakina rā ko te taiao,
kia taiao tonu rā.

Mā tātou katoa e mahi tahi, e whai tahi,
e whakaaro tahi kia tiakina te taiao
kia ora tonu ai te waiora,
kia whakaora ai i te tangata ora.

In the beginning, there was the life-giving water, and, in the end, it
is life-giving water that remains.

Where did this water of vitality come from?
It has journeyed from distant horizons,
and it has risen from places near us. It has climbed to the heavens,
and it has poured back down to the earth.
Let it flow with strength
as it moves across the land, it brings life,
as it moves through people, it gives them life
Behold-the breath of life!

Rain falls from the sky onto the peaks of mountains,
binding sky and land together as one.
From there, it continues its journey, rushing as rivers toward the sea,
sustaining both people and the world they belong to.

Water heals the land,
and the land, in turn, guides the water.
Yet the winds may stir it into restless waves,
and in their force, the waters may flood the land and unsettle
humankind.

But ultimately, it is up to us, the people,
to care for the land, support it, protect it,
so that the natural world may endure in its pure state.

Together, we must work, strive, and think as one
to safeguard the natural world,
so that the waters of life may continue to flow,
and in doing so, sustain all living people.

This page: Aerial view of the Kaituna wetlands, Bay of Plenty
(2026)

Photo credit: Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Cover page: Hutt River Te Awa Kairangi (2026)

Photo credit: Habilis

A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRS

In 2022 Te Uru Kahika presented Before the Deluge, the business case for co-investment in national flood risk resilience. As a result of the business case and subsequent work from the sector and officials, the Government committed to multiple tranches of co-funding for some of the country's most pressing flood resilience challenges.

This investment has been hugely successful. Deferred projects have been reactivated, jobs created, and capacity and capability expanded across regional Aotearoa New Zealand.

And most importantly, the projects have worked – essential flood resilience upgrades have been tested in the severe weather events that have battered the country over the last few years. Yet stopbanks held, pump stations preformed, and communities and businesses and farms remained protected from the worst effects of widespread and destructive flooding.

We can now begin to capitalise on these benefits as a nation, by extending the tranche-by-tranche commitment to a long-term national flood risk resilience framework.

Te Uru Kahika is now presenting an updated Before The Deluge, our plan for how the sector and the Crown can jointly build a 30 year investment pipeline that will protect our people and our economy for the next 100 years. It stands on the principles and working relationships developed over previous tranches of investment, and sets out how we can understand flood risk, prioritise investment, and deliver outcomes at scale and at pace.

We know that the world is changing. Climate change continues to challenge the infrastructure developed over the last century with larger and more frequent events; and as our economy and communities have grown the value of what we wish to protect has increased.

So we need to take a long view: what will the weather bring, and what do our communities and businesses require. This business case begins to answer those questions, and propose a way for all of us – communities, Councils, and the Crown – to develop a way forward that will benefit us all.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Daran Ponter

Chair, Greater Wellington Regional Council



Dr Deon Swiggs

Chair, Canterbury Regional Council

On behalf of chairs and mayors of Regional and Unitary Councils of Aotearoa New Zealand

Flood control gates at the Moutoa floodway (2026)
Photo credit: Horizons Regional Council



THE ROLE OF TE URU KAHIKA



Te Uru Kahika is as key mechanism for national collaboration amongst the 16 Regional and Unitary Councils.

The 16 regional and unitary councils across Aotearoa are tasked with the integrated management of land, air, and water resources; supporting biodiversity and biosecurity; provision of transport services regionally; and building community resilience against climate change and natural hazards such as floods.

Collectively the regional sector's efforts are represented – through council Chief Executives – under Te Uru Kahika. The organisation draws on expertise from across the country and the local knowledge of our people to promote the wellbeing of our environments and our communities.

In recent years, Te Uru Kahika has boosted its capacity to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. The increase in flooding expected due to climate change has been a particular focus of this collective, as well as for the councils themselves.

The work is being led by the River Managers' Special Interest Group (SIG), comprised of regional and unitary councils working collaboratively to increase community flood resilience.

River management and flood resilience schemes, managed by the regional sector, have a critical role in mitigating against the full consequences of damaging flood events, the most frequent natural hazard experienced in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, climate change is expected to lead to more frequent and intense floods, and adapting to these increasing risks in the face of climate change comes with costs that should not be shouldered at a regional level alone.

Accordingly, Te Uru Kahika has drawn on the knowledge and experience of the River Managers, their Integrated Catchments teams, scientists and specialists from a wide range of disciplines, and the skills of the wider regional and unitary councils in areas such as asset management, financial planning, procurement, and community engagement, to develop the document you hold in your hands.

This is our collective view of how we can help secure more resilient communities and a stronger economy, working with and alongside the rivers that sustain us.

THE SCOPE OF THIS BUSINESS CASE

Flood risk resilience has a number of essential components, only some of which are addressed in this business case.

Weather events are the direct driver of flooding in catchments.

Weather prediction and flood modelling are undertaken by Earth Sciences NZ and Councils, and investment in this area is out of scope for this business case.

Land use has a direct effect on flooding intensity and impact.

Different land uses can exacerbate or help mitigate flooding, but changing land use in specific catchments is out of scope for this business case.

Infrastructure improves flood risk resilience.

Both “hard” infrastructure like stop banks and pump stations can increase flood risk resilience, as can nature-based solutions such as wetland restoration. These investments are in **scope** for this business case.

Immediate response is needed when floods occur.

Both central and local government have extensive investments in response and recovery, and these areas of investment are out of scope for this business case.

This business case follows the Better Business Case methodology, and sets out the rationale for establishing a long-term co-investment framework between regional and unitary councils and the Crown, in order to address the pressing challenges of national flood risk resilience.

The scope of the investment is the infrastructure that supports flood resilience – the stop banks, pump stations, wetlands, and managed structures that reduces the risk of flooding in major weather events

The scope of this business case excludes the emergency response associated with natural disasters, along with land use change that can affect the trajectory of flooding, or managed retreat for either communities or businesses, and coastal infrastructure, except where it is required to convey rivers safely to the sea. These elements will form part of subsequent policy and investment proposals.



**Te Uru
Kahika**

Regional and
Unitary Councils
Actuaries

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Stopbanks at the Kaituna wetlands, Bay of Plenty (2026)
Photo credit: Sallience



Executive summary



Maketu flood control gates (2026)
Photo credit: Tim D

THE CASE FOR LONG-TERM INVESTMENT CERTAINTY

We are seeking Crown co-investment of \$240 million per annum in flood resilience infrastructure to help protect our nation.

Aotearoa New Zealand is planning to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure over the coming decades, but those investments can only deliver their intended value if they are protected from flooding – our country's most frequent and costly natural hazard.

The very first point of defence for our country's infrastructure – along with the people and the interdependent systems that rely on it – is flood resilience infrastructure. This shares the same objectives and outcomes as our national infrastructure – while also protecting it; yet, it has remained largely peripheral to the long-term investment conversation despite its direct and indirect reach across almost every asset and stakeholder in the country.

As the regional sector collective will argue throughout this document, flood resilience infrastructure is not simply an investment in stopbanks, floodways, and drainage systems; it is an investment in the continued functioning of the people, places, businesses, and infrastructure that underpin Aotearoa New Zealand's economy and wellbeing. That's why the conversation about infrastructure must include flood resilience.

The time for a national commitment to co-investment is now.

We are therefore seeking a long-term co-investment commitment from the Crown of \$240 million per annum, alongside the \$160 million per annum provided by regional and unitary councils.

This 60/40 co-investment split builds on the successful tranches of projects delivered since 2021 – and will provide the certainty for councils, communities, the rural sector, and the construction sector, to build homes and businesses, workforces and capability, and long-term certainty for our nation.

Some of the flood resilience assets of councils were originally constructed a century ago, with an eye to the protection and future prosperity of our nation. Many were constructed with support from the Crown, investing alongside local farmers and businesses and communities.

Throughout this document, we make the case that investment in protection and resilience is far cheaper than paying the costs of response and recovery; the events of Cyclone Gabrielle and even the floods of January 2026 have taught us this lesson, again and again.

So councils are seeking a renewal of our collective commitment to flood resilience, and seeking an ongoing Crown commitment to the infrastructure that we all rely on. We look forward to working with Ministers and officials to make this a reality.

NEW ZEALAND IS IN A PERPETUAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

Flood risk



NO. 1 HAZARD

Floods are our most common natural hazard in New Zealand



\$213 BILLION

Replacement value of for >282,000 houses in flood-prone zones



750,000 PEOPLE

1 in 7 New Zealanders living in flood-prone zones



\$446 MILLION

Annual average cost of repairing critical infrastructure damaged by flooding alone.

367

flood resilience schemes

1.5 m

Hectares of land directly protected by schemes nationally

Costs and benefits



\$2.3 BILLION

Capital value of schemes



\$11 BILLION

Annual benefits from schemes



\$200 MILLION

Annual op-ex for schemes to maintain current level of service



5:1 BCR

Benefit-to-cost ratio of flood resilience in New Zealand

Flooding is the most common natural hazard in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a major flood event occurring on average every eight months. Across the country, around 750,000 people – or 14% of the population – live in areas prone to flooding.

Flood resilience schemes comprise a core economic enabling infrastructure and are crucial to the economic, social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing of Aotearoa.

Here's where the problem lies. Our ageing flood resilience infrastructure is facing pressure from all sides: climate change, affordability, legislation requirements, and land use change. Schemes are largely funded through targeted rates and operated and managed by local and regional councils – and the pace of investment can't keep up with the growing challenges.

Assets protected under existing schemes – including crucial Crown Infrastructure – have steadily increased in value, thereby increasing the costs of damage in a flood event

Higher premiums and insurance industry withdrawal from flood insurance provision will have lasting impacts for vulnerable groups and communities

Existing flood resilience schemes require repair, maintenance, and upgrading – with costs exceeding current ratepayer base capacity

Climate change will increase the frequency and severity of floods, creating risks for our community and economic resilience

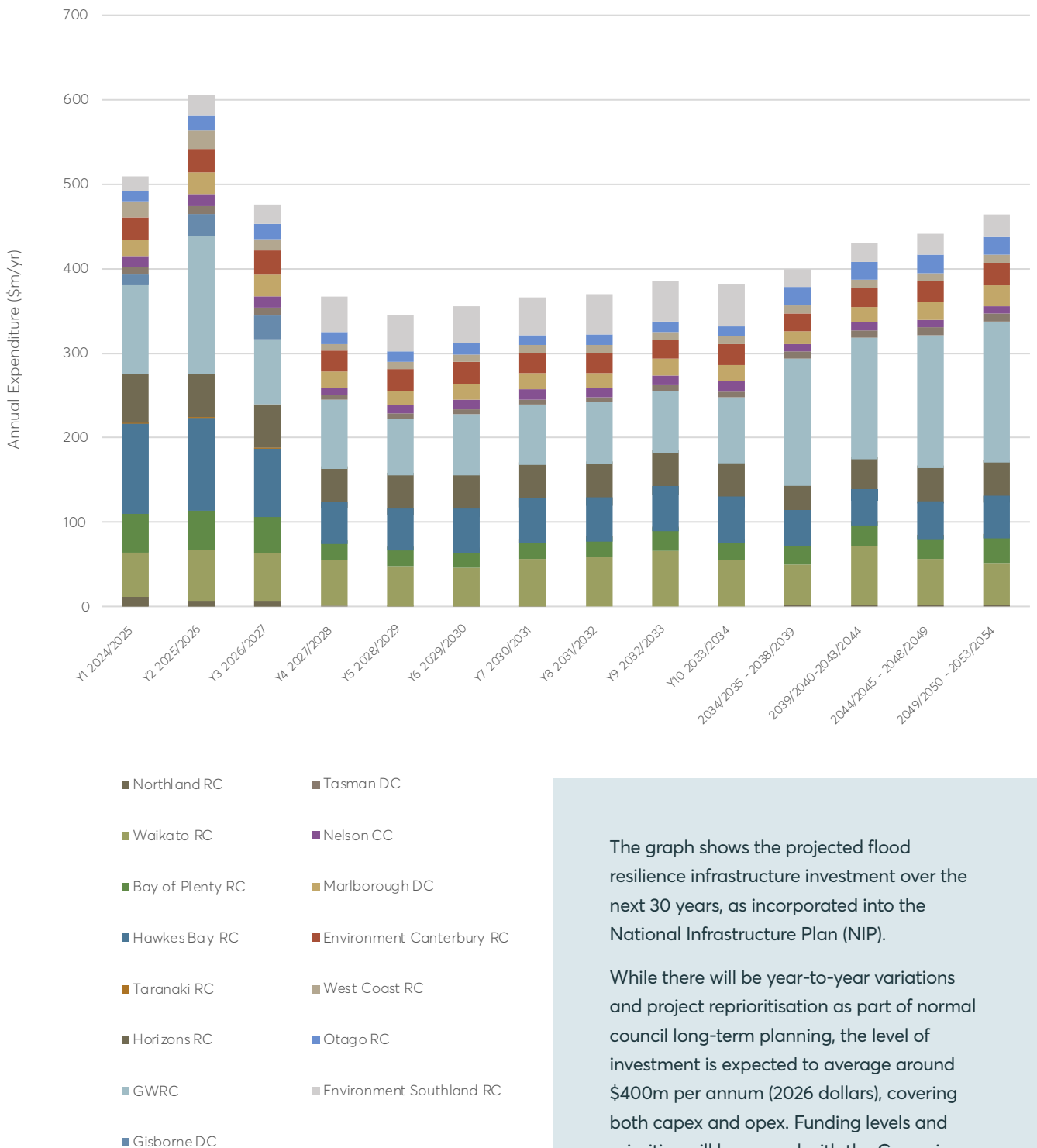
Whirinaki residential stop bank (n.d.)
Source: Hawkes Bay Regional Council

Flood schemes deliver billions in protection and avoided losses of Crown assets on non-rateable land, and critical national infrastructure such as three waters, transport networks, and energy and telecommunication links. Yet, flood resilience has sat largely outside central government conversations for the past three decades – until five years ago. While recent investments has been transformative, flood resilience cannot be delivered through stop-start funding approach.

Planning, maintaining, and upgrading infrastructure requires certainty and continuity, not intermittent funding that makes it harder to take a strategic, long-term approach.

THE SECTOR IS PROPOSING A \$400M ANNUAL CO-INVESTMENT

We are proposing the Crown invests \$240 million per annum, alongside regional and unitary council investment of \$160 million per annum.



The graph shows the projected flood resilience infrastructure investment over the next 30 years, as incorporated into the National Infrastructure Plan (NIP).

While there will be year-to-year variations and project reprioritisation as part of normal council long-term planning, the level of investment is expected to average around \$400m per annum (2026 dollars), covering both capex and opex. Funding levels and priorities will be agreed with the Crown in the context of the statutory Long Term Plan (LTP) processes.

CONTINUING THE CURRENT INVESTMENT SHARING

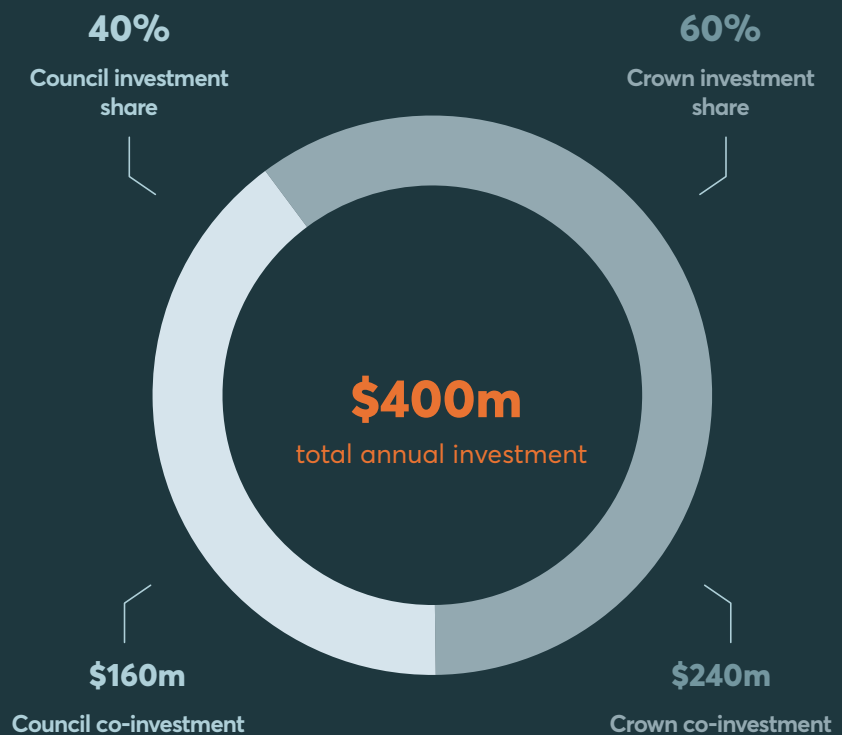
Starting with post-COVID recovery funding in 2021, the Crown and the sector have agreed four tranches of co-investment in flood resilience, totalling \$659m. This has enabled long-delayed projects to be accelerated, with resultant benefits to communities and businesses – including effective protection during Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle, and the severe weather events of early 2026.

A further \$370m of co-investment is being discussed as part of the next tranche of activity, which will enable longer-term projects to be progressed.

In all tranches, 60% of the investment has been provided by the Crown, with the remaining 40% coming from regional and unitary councils. The sector – via Te Uru Kahika – is proposing to formalise this co-investment methodology into a long-term commitment, in order to build a national pipeline of flood resilience projects.

As the graph on the preceding page shows, around \$400 million in annual investment is required to address the challenges of climate change pressure, the growing value of economic activity on land vulnerable to flooding, and a growing population. The Crown commitment being sought is \$240m per annum, significantly less than the repair and recovery costs being incurred by the government from flood events.

The co-investment approach is similar to that agreed with councils for local roads, via the NZ Transport Agency, where there is a proportional commitment that allows the Crown, councils, and the contracting sector to plan and deliver projects with certainty. The approach will be supported by a national prioritisation framework provided via Te Uru Kahika, which will deliver a high degree of investment transparency.



This value represents the long-term average annual investment, comprising both CAPEX and OPEX, split evenly (50/50) and expressed in constant 2026 dollars.



THE BENEFITS TO THE CROWN ARE SIGNIFICANT

There are significant savings to be made by the Crown by investing in protection rather than recovery.



The size of the risk to Aotearoa New Zealand's economic and social infrastructure from major flooding events is significant, with damage able to reach into the billions of dollars – as was the case with Cyclones Gabrielle and Hale in 2023.

This means the fiscal benefits to the nation from flood resilience are high. According to analysis undertaken by New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) in 2021, the benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of flood resilience is at least 5:1, which means that every dollar invested returns \$5 in direct economic benefit through avoided loss. If we take into account the indirect and social benefits to businesses and communities, the benefits are even greater.

The Crown is also a direct beneficiary of investment in flood resilience infrastructure. Under the Local Government Act, councils are required to consider who benefits from infrastructure when determining how costs are apportioned. Given the significant fiscal and economic benefits that accrue nationally through avoided disaster recovery costs, protected public infrastructure, and reduced disruption to economic activity, there is a strong rationale for Crown investment alongside local government. In this context, the Crown is exposed to the fiscal impacts of flooding in a number of ways:

1. Crown infrastructure – including roads, schools, hospitals, and many other asset classes – is exposed to flood damage.
2. The Crown is the primary funder of recovery costs, as shown by 2023 weather events which costed the Government around \$6.65 billion, where national resources were mobilised to provide immediate assistance and support to affected communities and businesses.
3. The Crown becomes the insurer of last resort when flood damage exceeds commercial insurance cover and the assets are nationally important, even where the asset may not be owned directly by the Crown. Essential land remediation after a major flooding event is an example.
4. The Crown bears the long-term fiscal impacts of social and economic disruption, with social welfare costs from displacement, income support, health and education impacts, and much more. Research following Cyclone Gabrielle shows that these effects can last for years after the disaster.
5. The Crown also bears the impact of post-flood economic disruption, expressed as lower tax revenues from businesses and individuals.

Investment in flood resilience is therefore a sensible and prudent step for the Crown to take, in order to decrease the immediate and long-term impacts of major flood events. Doing so – putting money into prevention rather than recovery – brings us into line with our OECD peers, who tend to invest to a greater level than Aotearoa New Zealand does in the first lines of defence against the most common natural disaster.

PRIORITISING AND AGREEING THE CO-INVESTMENT PIPELINE

We need to meet the challenges of our times by providing certainty to communities and businesses.



Construction of stopbank in Pōrangahū (n.d.)
Photo credit: Hawkes Bay Regional Council

A key component of our national investment in flood resilience is ensuring we're prioritising the right projects at the right time. The first step in this process is to co-develop a pipeline of investment, and the sector is proposing an approach similar in concept to the National Land Transport Programme, as follows:

- 1 **Three-yearly statements**
The Government publishes a three-yearly policy and prioritisation statement, potentially as part of updates to the National Infrastructure Plan
- 2 **Project prioritisation**
Regional and unitary councils respond to the policy statement by providing a prioritised national list of flood resilience investments, including the cost-benefit assessment for each project
- 3 **Agreed pipeline**
The pipeline of prioritised projects is agreed between the government and councils, and co-investment milestones and drawdowns are agreed on an annual basis as part of normal Budget processes
- 4 **Oversight and monitoring**
Oversight and monitoring is provided by a responsible government agency, with progress reporting provided by councils.

Te Uru Kahika is proposing that the prioritised pipeline of investments is maintained within the GIS-based Flood Resilience Investment Prioritisation Platform (FRIPP) – currently under development. One of the key objectives of the FRIPP platform is to enable decision makers at all levels – community, regionally, nationally – to assess options and set priorities for the decades ahead through a combination of functions such as scenario modelling, prioritisation modelling, regional and national flood modelling, and valuation layer. More on this in Section 5.

The approach builds on the mechanisms developed through multiple tranches of co-investment via the Regional Infrastructure Fund, and establishes the processes as a permanent part of the machinery of government.

There are some open questions that will require further discussion with the Crown, such as the choice of overseeing agency, integration of the pipeline with the National Infrastructure Plan, and whether any enabling legislation is necessary for long-term certainty. These and related operational matters can be explored by officials and council staff as part of the implementation plan discussed later in this document.

"Storms and flooding will become more severe and frequent over the next 30 years due to climate change. Infrastructure investment will be needed to respond to damaging events and to improve community resilience."

– National Infrastructure Plan, ten priorities for the coming decade ahead

PERSPECTIVES: MAINTAINING MOMENTUM



My name is Graeme Campbell, I'm a Chartered Professional Engineer, a Fellow of Engineering NZ, and I'm the Principal Flood Management Advisor at Te Uru Kahika.

We're a nation shaped by water, enriched by our rivers, and threatened by rains and floods. Our rivers have determined where we've built our cities and the kinds of activities we undertake on the land. They provide the life to our land, nurture our wellbeing and they help drive our economy. So whether we appreciate it or not, our rivers are at the heart of our country and how we inhabit this land.

My career has followed the trajectory of flood risk resilience in Aotearoa New Zealand. I started by designing and building major flood resilience projects in Tairāwhiti around Cyclone Bola, which led to flood risk management roles and 20 years at Greater Wellington Regional Council, managing the flood resilience team. So my career has gradually evolved into working with people, then convening the national River Managers Special Interest Group for a decade to 2025, and now facilitating our national response to the emerging flooding challenges.

We need all the tools in the box to help communities live with and be resilient to the floods that are happening with ever increasing regularity and intensity. This business case focuses on the flood infrastructure investment, but it's only part of the story. We also need good emergency management capability, and to match our land use to the flood risk that remains after the infrastructure is in place. This is going to be the biggest challenge we face into the future and will take time to address, so in the meantime we have to invest in infrastructure to give communities and businesses time to adapt.

Over the last few years – in close partnership with the Crown – we've taken the first steps to catching up on the delayed projects, and it's paid dividends. Based on all my decades of engineering experience, I know there would have been major flooding earlier this year if key flood gates and pump stations and stop banks hadn't been upgraded through the Regional Infrastructure Fund co-investments. I'm proud of how the sector has developed over the last decade what we've achieved working together across the sector and with Government.

But the thing about being a flood engineer is that it teaches the discipline of taking the long view. The challenges are increasing, the value of what we're protecting is growing, and we need to work together more than ever.

That's why we've developed this business case: because we need a national response to a national challenge. We need an agreed and prioritised roadmap of investment, a stable co-investment approach, a predictable pipeline of projects, and certainty for communities and businesses and farmers. We can be much more efficient in our delivery with a consistent investment stream, one that enables us to invest in training and develop our younger generations of engineers who will be essential to meeting the challenges of the future.

These projects translate into the things Kiwis want: knowing that the risk of flood waters through their homes and businesses and farms is being managed and mitigated, as much as we can. It's not in our national DNA to walk away from these challenges but we need the resources, both human and financial, to help navigate a path through them. So we're looking forward to continuing to work with the Crown to achieve as much long-term certainty as we can for our nation.



Graeme Campbell

Principal Flood Management Advisor
Te Uru Kahika

1

The case for change

Aotearoa New Zealand's flood resilience infrastructure is complex and multi-layered, and manages billions of dollars of assets and hundreds of billions of dollars of economic and social risks – therefore, also making it as an economic resilience infrastructure.

This section provides an overview of the flood resilience infrastructure from prevention to disaster recovery, highlighting the areas that regional and unitary councils are responsible for – and it looks at the current emerging challenges to that system.

The challenges include scheme affordability and sustainability, the pressures from climate change and land use change, and the looming threat of insurance retreat from some of the riskier areas of the country.



FLOOD RESILIENCE IS THE INFRASTRUCTURE BEHIND THE INFRASTRUCTURE

The objectives of flood resilience and the national infrastructure investment are one and the same; however, before infrastructure can grow the economy, it must first survive the storm.

Aotearoa New Zealand is investing heavily in infrastructure – but without coordinated flood resilience, that investment remains exposed.

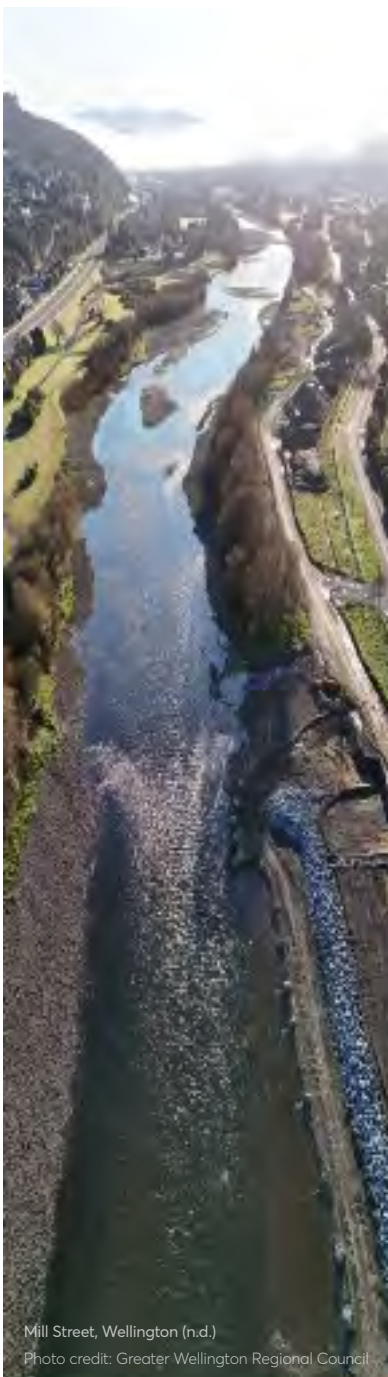
Infrastructure is the foundation upon which Aotearoa New Zealand's economy, communities, and way of life depend. From energy and water systems to transport and communications networks, these assets enable the movement of people, goods, and services while supporting the physical, financial, social, and natural capital that drives living standards. Therefore, it makes sense as to why delivering and maintaining better infrastructure is a key part of the Government's plan to fix the basics and build the future New Zealanders both need and deserve, now and into the future.

Before infrastructure can support our aspirations, it must first be able to withstand the forces that threaten it. "We can't stop severe weather events from happening, but we can be much better prepared for them", as Nicola Willis noted in May 2026. Indeed, flood events is New Zealand's most common and disruptive natural hazard, and its about to get much worse both in frequency and severity.

The very first point of defence to the country's infrastructure – along with the people and the interdependent systems that rely on it – is flood resilience infrastructure. Flood resilience infrastructure share the same objectives and outcomes as our national infrastructure – while also protecting it; yet, it has remained largely peripheral to the infrastructure conversation despite its direct and indirect reach across almost every asset and stakeholder in the country.

Almost every part of the economy depends on infrastructure functioning effectively and reliably, and by extension, on flood resilience infrastructure that protect it. Time and again, we have seen how severe weather events and flooding have damaged our natural and built environment, disrupted critical services, and destroyed physical assets. These impacts generated significant localised economic losses that, when compounded across communities, sectors, and supply chains, translated into substantial costs for the wider economy. We've seen this with the Auckland Anniversary floods and Cyclone Gabrielle.

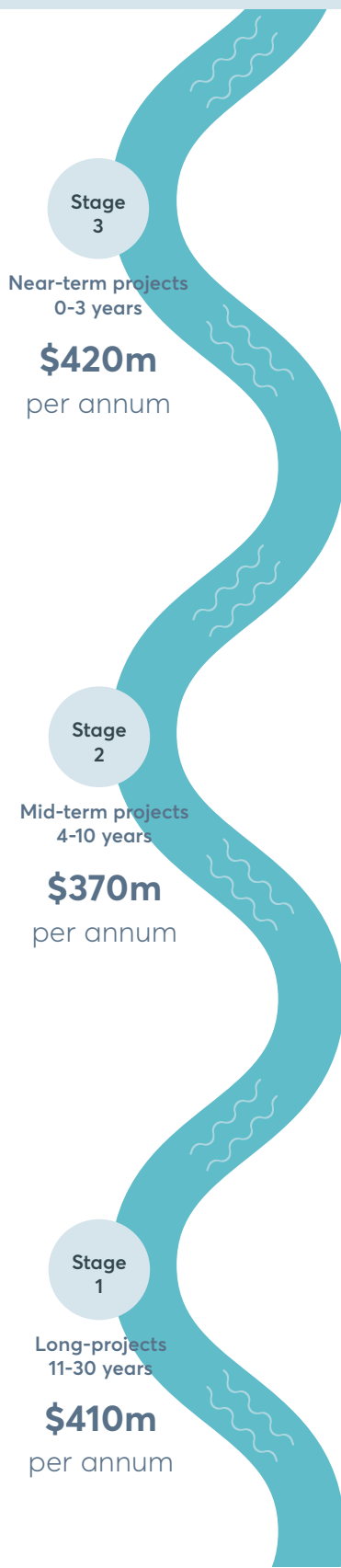
That's why the conversation about infrastructure must also be a conversation about flood resilience. Aotearoa New Zealand is planning to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure over the coming decades, but those investments can only deliver their intended value if they are protected from our most frequent and costly natural hazard. Flood resilience infrastructure is not simply an investment in stopbanks, floodways, and drainage systems; it is an investment in the continued functioning of the people, places, businesses, and infrastructure that underpin Aotearoa New Zealand's economy and wellbeing.



Mill Street, Wellington (n.d.)
Photo credit: Greater Wellington Regional Council

WE'RE ASKING FOR LONG-TERM CROWN CO-INVESTMENT

Capital investment pipeline



The Government's recent infrastructure direction, including its acceptance of the Infrastructure Commission's recommendations, closely aligns with the intent of this programme.

Te Uru Kahika is seeking to establish a long-term co-investment agreement with the Crown. The co-investment mechanism proposes an approach similar in concept to Te Waihanga's National Infrastructure Plan, as follows:

- 1 Three-yearly statements**
The Government publishes a three-yearly policy and prioritisation statement, potentially as part of updates to the National Infrastructure Plan (NIP)
- 2 Project prioritisation**
Regional and unitary councils respond to the policy statement by providing a prioritised national list of flood resilience investments, including the cost-benefit assessment for each project
- 3 Agreed pipeline**
The pipeline of prioritised projects is agreed between the government and councils, and co-investment milestones and drawdowns are agreed on an annual basis as part of normal Budget processes
- 4 Oversight and monitoring**
Oversight and monitoring is provided by a responsible government agency, with progress reporting provided by councils.

Te Uru Kahika is proposing that the prioritised pipeline of investments is maintained within the GIS-based Flood Resilience Investment Prioritisation Platform (FRIPP) – currently under development. One of the key objectives of the FRIPP platform is to enable decision makers at all levels – community, regionally, nationally – to assess options and set priorities for the decades ahead through a combination of functions such as scenario modelling, prioritisation modelling, regional and national flood modelling, and valuation layer. More on this in Section 5.

The approach builds on the mechanisms developed through multiple tranches of co-investment via the Regional Infrastructure Fund, and establishes the processes as a permanent part of the machinery of government.

There are some open questions that will require further discussion with the Crown, such as the choice of overseeing agency, integration of the pipeline with the National Infrastructure Plan, and whether any enabling legislation is necessary for long-term certainty. These and related operational matters can be explored by officials and council staff as part of the implementation plan discussed later in this document.

FLOOD RESILIENCE PROTECTS INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE

Insufficient investment in flood resilience risks new infrastructure investments increasingly being placed into systems already vulnerable to disruption – leading to repeated cycles of damage, repair, and reinvestment.



We are asking the Crown to co-invest about 50-56% of the average cost they pay every year to fix infrastructure damage caused by flooding.

The Te Waihangā | Infrastructure Commission's 30-year NIP – backed by almost all of Parliament, with the Government declaring support or support-in principle of the recommendations outlined – sets out a pathway for maximising the economic value from Aotearoa New Zealand's infrastructure spend.

With around 12,000 individual projects in planning and delivery valued at \$275 billion across every sector and region within the next 10 years, NIP highlights that Aotearoa is planning on delivering more infrastructure projects that we can afford. Our country spends 5.8% of gross domestic product (GDP) on infrastructure – placing us among the highest in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – yet continues to rank low in terms of efficiency and value for money. NIP sets out recommendations under four high-level themes:



Planning what
we can afford



Looking after
what we have



Prioritising the
right projects



Making it easier
to build better

Flood resilience is not an adjacent consideration to NIP – it is a prerequisite for its success. Without it, the goals of better planning, better prioritisation, and better delivery for our current and future generations cannot be achieved at system scale. Especially at a time when the Government's focus is increasingly on renewing and maintaining existing infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner, it is not cost-effective to continue investing in infrastructure without addressing the most common natural hazard that threaten their performance, lifespan, and value.

A new unpublished study by Earth Sciences NZ and Te Waihangā reveals the average cost of losing infrastructure to flooding is at \$446 million a year – \$281 million from rainfall and river flooding, and \$165 million from coastal flooding. As climate change intensifies, these costs will unsurprisingly increase. The true cost of flooding is substantially higher once indirect economic, social and environmental costs, impacts on the productive sector, flood infrastructure damages, and emergency response and recovery costs are taken into account.

By comparison, the average annual investment sought through this programme to maintain and renew Aotearoa New Zealand's flood resilience infrastructure is \$26 to \$76 million less than the cost of flood damage incurred in a single year, and only 50-56% of what we're asking from the Crown. The difference is that one is a planned investment that reduces future risk; the other is an escalating liability.

As Aotearoa embarks on its largest infrastructure programme in generations, continuing to place or upgrade assets into increasingly flood-prone systems without addressing their underlying resilience risks locks the country into an expensive cycle of damage, repair, and reinvestment.

CO-INVESTMENT IS THE SOLUTION

We are not starting at zero; recent co-investment between government and local authorities has delivered real results.



Waiohiki stopbank works, Hawkes Bay (n.d.)
Photo credit: Hawkes Bay Regional Council

Our work to date is a proof of concept that Crown co-investment is the way forward.

In 2020, central government co-invested \$217 million into 55 flood resilience projects across the country, as part of the COVID-19 recovery programme. This investment represented the most significant contribution to flood resilience from central government in over 30 years and fast-tracked 'shovel-ready' projects to improve long-term community flood resilience much sooner than planned. This highly successful programme was the first step in establishing an effective ongoing co-investment partnership for flood resilience between central and local government.

Realising the effectiveness of unity in managing the scale of the challenge, Resilient River Communities (RRC) was formed in 2021 – a joint initiative between government (managed by Kānoa - Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit) and regional and unitary councils.

Collectively, regional and unitary authorities through the River Managers' Special Interest Groups got to work through the development of *"Before the Deluge"* business case. Tranche One established the foundation, with central government co-investment positioned as essential to enabling regions to deliver resilience projects at the scale and pace required, to bring together fragmented regional assessments into a national picture of vulnerability and opportunity. It framed flood resilience as core infrastructure, not discretionary spending, and positioned early investment as the economically rational path. The argument was built on avoided loss: fewer damaged homes, fewer broken roads, fewer disrupted services, and reduced long-term fiscal exposure for both councils and central government. Then the climate stopped being an abstraction. Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle shifted the conversation decisively. Infrastructure that had been flagged as vulnerable in Tranche One failed in ways that were both predictable in hindsight and devastating in practice. The system was no longer describing what might happen; it was documenting what had already occurred.

"Before the Deluge 2" emerged from this urgency. It strengthened and accelerated the original investment case, refining the evidence base and reprioritising projects in light of recent events. The focus shifted from building the argument to enabling delivery. Projects were reassessed through the lens of recent events, with greater emphasis on protecting critical infrastructure, restoring resilience to damaged systems, and reducing the likelihood of repeat impacts in the same locations. Before the Deluge 2 strengthened the case for accelerated co-investment, recognising that climate resilience is a shared national responsibility rather than a burden that can be carried by local communities alone. Before the Deluge 2 has been successfully delivered in three tranches.

A permanent co-investment commitment is the natural progression of this work – providing the certainty needed to plan, prioritise, and deliver flood resilience investment over the long term, supporting the resilience of the infrastructure, businesses, and communities that underpin Aotearoa New Zealand's economy.

CURRENT STATE OF FLOOD RESILIENCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Flood risk



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Floods are our most common natural hazard in New Zealand



\$213 BILLION

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1 in 7 New Zealanders living in flood-prone zones



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Annual op-ex for schemes to maintain current level of service



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Benefit-to-cost ratio of flood resilience in New Zealand

Flooding is the most common natural hazard in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a major flood event occurring on average every eight months. Across the country, around 750,000 people – or 14% of the population – live in areas prone to flooding.

It is evident that flood resilience schemes comprise a core economic enabling infrastructure and are crucial to the economic, social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing of Aotearoa.

Here's where the problem lies. Our ageing flood resilience infrastructure is facing pressure from all sides: climate change, affordability, legislation requirements, and land use change. Schemes are largely funded through targeted rates and operated and managed by local and regional councils – and to say councils are struggling to keep up is an understatement.

Assets protected under existing schemes – including crucial Crown Infrastructure – have steadily increased in value, thereby increasing the costs of damage in a flood event

Higher premiums and insurance industry withdrawal from flood insurance provision will have lasting impacts for vulnerable groups and communities

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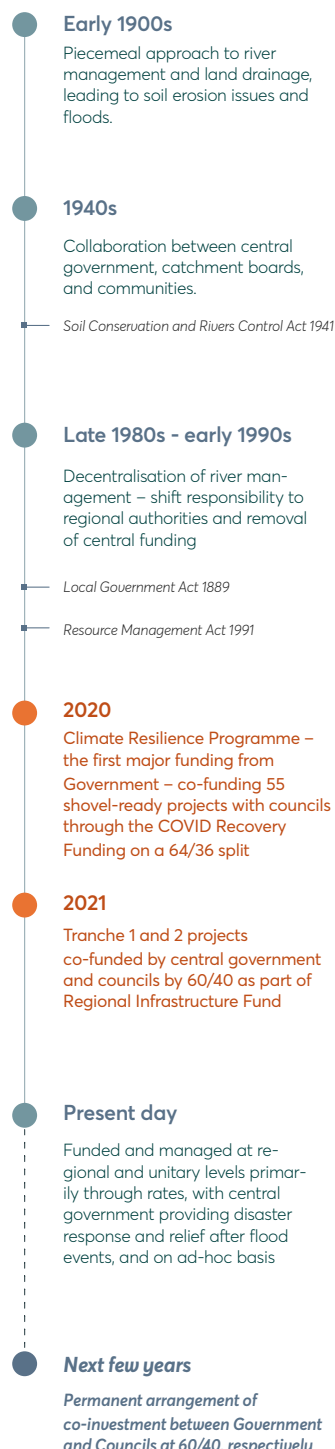
Whirinaki residential stop bank (n.d.)
Source: Hawkes Bay Regional Council

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Planning, maintaining, and upgrading infrastructure requires certainty and continuity, not intermittent funding that makes it harder to take a strategic, long-term approach.

THE EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL FLOOD RESILIENCE

To see why change is needed, we first need to look at the path that led here.



The current state of our national flood resilience reflects the absence of a once key partner – the central Government.

Aotearoa New Zealand's approach to river management and flood resilience has evolved significantly over the past century. Before the 1940s, it was fragmented and reactive – a patchwork of local efforts struggling to manage erosion, flooding, and pressure on waterways.

That changed with the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941. In a major shift, Aotearoa became a global leader in recognising that land and water must be managed together at a catchment scale. Catchment boards were established to plan and deliver flood resilience infrastructure, much of which underpins the system today.

At its peak, this was a genuine partnership. Catchment boards worked alongside communities and central government to deliver schemes that protected people and property while supporting economic wellbeing. Central government contributed 50–75% of capital works and around a third of maintenance. This funding acknowledged that Crown assets were directly benefiting from these schemes, whilst also recognising the wider national interests and government's responsibilities in being a joint investor. Local contributions, in turn, anchored ownership at community level.

That model shifted. Reforms in the 1980s, including the Local Government Act 1989 and the Resource Management Act 1991, transferred responsibility for river management and soil conservation to local government. This means regional and unitary councils funding flood resilience works almost entirely through regional and targeted levies on property owners on a beneficiary-pays approach – covering construction, maintenance, and upgrades of river control, flood resilience, and land drainage schemes.

On the other hand, central government's role has largely shifted to disaster response and recovery, rather than prevention and resilience. This is in contrast to international practice, where countries such as the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, and the United States maintain significant central government investment in flood mitigation as it is recognised as a shared national risk rather than a purely local burden.

Flood resilience infrastructure is struggling to keep pace, councils are under mounting pressure, and ratepayers can no longer carry the burden alone. Over the last five years, the Crown has provided three rounds of funding for flood resilience projects – effectively fast-tracking critical projects that deliver billions in avoided costs that simply would not have happened otherwise.

We need to move beyond the stop-start nature of the current funding arrangements to achieve greater certainty and maximise the benefits of flood risk resilience.

PERSPECTIVES: HOW TO INVEST WELL



I'm Mark Townsend and I'm the Engineering Manager for the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. My home is here, and I grew up in the Bay; all three of my children were born in Whakatāne. After studying in Auckland I came back here to be closer to the water, the beaches, the outdoors, all the things that makes this place great.

In my line of work I see lots of change, whether it's the beach profiles, river alignment or weather patterns. Sometimes is sudden, other times it's more gradual, but one thing I see most is the changes in our climate. Whether I'm looking at the data from the catchments or investigating on the ground with my team, the evidence is all around. We are experiencing more extremes; the big storms are bigger than before. We are having periodic prolonged wet periods with rainfall totals that exceed previous records, and our lakes have risen and stayed at high levels for longer. And then there are the droughts. It's getting more complex and more difficult to manage every year.

My degree is in Civil Engineering, so I'm definitely the guy that can tell you about how high we need to make the stop banks or the benefits of a set of control gates, like the ones at the Kaituna wetlands just around from Maketu. But I'm also the guy that's going to tell you we can't continue to build the stop banks higher year after year – the climate is outrunning us and it's just not affordable.

Our traditional flood resilience methods aren't sustainable in the long term. We need joined up approaches that mean real resilience for our communities and productive land, that keep the wetlands healthy and the fish running in the rivers, and can respond when the big rains come. No single organisation or community can do all that, so we need to get better at working together.

Like in the rest of the country, we look at what's going to work for the whole catchment. In places that means improved community resilience, enhanced emergency response, nature based solutions, restoring wetlands and giving the river room to move, but it also means hard engineering – earthworks and concrete and steel to constrain the flows and channel the water in floods. We try to limit hard engineering wherever possible to critical infrastructure that needs to be defended.

We spend a lot of time working with communities on what happens where. Access to our rivers is a key theme we hear out in our communities. Sometimes people want stop banks for the reassurance, but it's not always the right solution, so we need to keep talking and keep exploring the options and keep learning from the locals about what's important for them, how the river behaves and what's happening on the ground in a big flood.

That's really the best part of my job: talking to people. Whether it's a hui with local hapū or chatting to the guys fishing off the end of the pier at Kaituna or a meeting with representatives of a flood scheme, everyone has the same concerns: how do we protect each other and protect what's here. Because everyone can see the climate changing.

Most times, after a few cups of tea and a bit of a chat, what comes out is the very strong desire to make good decisions for future generations. Sure, people want to keep the water out of their houses and farms in the here and now, but we all see the need to invest well and come up with solutions that will work long after we've handed it all to our kids and grandkids.

There's plenty of great bits of engineering and whole schemes I'm really proud of in the Bay. And if I do my job right, I'm hopeful that all the people who come after us will be proud of them as well.

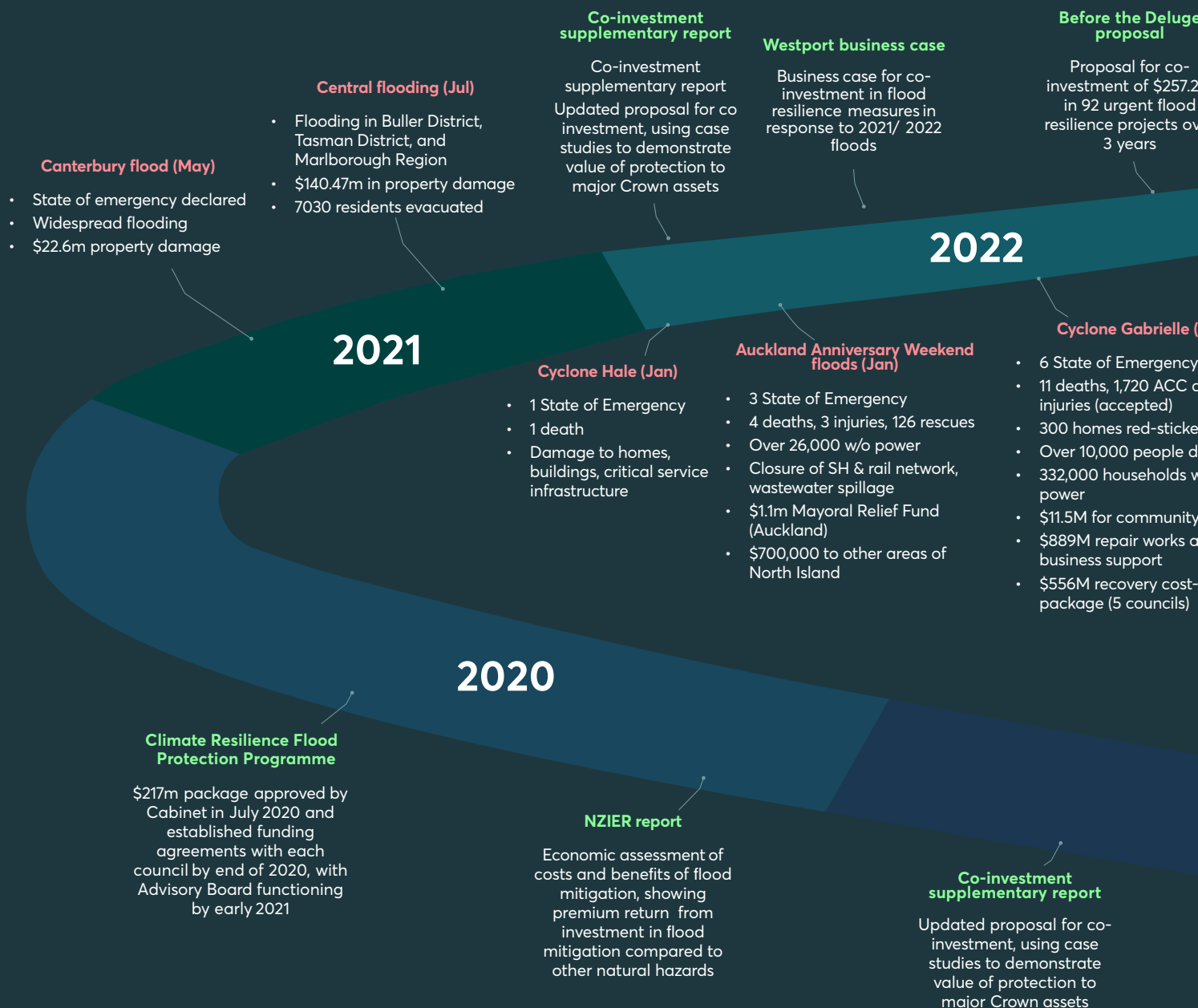
Mark Townsend | Engineering Manager
Bay of Plenty Regional Council | Toi Moana



Photo credit: Tim D

TAKING THE LONG VIEW

Te Uru Kahika's work to develop a national strategy for flood risk resilience is set against the backdrop of major weather events, repeated flooding in communities across the country, and the economic and social and human impacts of natural disasters. The timeline tells only part of the story: we have made much collective progress, but we need to put in place the long-term strategies that will protect our economy and our communities into the future.



- 1 fatality
- Flooded
- 3 State of Emergency
- Classified as a disaster
- Nelson District Council
- three
- 150 years

Winter floods (Jun)

ality
ding and landslips
ates of Emergency
sified as medium-scale
erse event

on, Tasman, and Marlborough
icts, where Nelson experienced
e waves of flooding "worst in
years"

Tranche Three proposal submitted

Request to fund 30
projects based on
avoided costs on assets

2025**Selwyn district flooding (May)**

- Local State of Emergency
- Roads closed and damaged

Otago flooding (Oct)

- Local State of Emergency declared for Dunedin City
- \$1.5m road and infrastructure damage
- \$33.8m private insurance claims

2024**Updated co-investment case**

Refresh of Before the Deluge
proposal with updated list of
priority projects and
investment requirements

2023**Ex-tropical Cyclone Lola (Oct)**

- SH closures, school closures
- Roads damaged and closed, transport disruptions

Heavy rain & flooding (June)

- 1 State of Emergency (Tairāwhiti)
- Over 130 residents evacuated
- SH closures, 91 local roads damaged or closed, restricting access to region
- Grid emergency in Hawke's Bay / Gisborne
- \$200M recovery package

Heavy rain & flooding (Sep)

- 2 States of Emergency declared (Queenstown, Southland)
- 100 homes evacuated
- SH closures, damage to school and water treatment plant
- Widespread power outages

Torrential rain & floods (May)

- 1 State of Emergency (Auckland)
- 1 death (Northland)
- Damage to homes, school closures
- Several road closures
- Transport disruptions

(Feb)

claims

red
isplaced
without

response
and

sharing

2034**Wellington (Jun)**

- States of Emergency
- 100+ flights cancelled
- 5000+ homes lost power

Wet weather system (Feb)

- 1 fatality
- 6 States of Emergency
- 100+ flights cancelled
- 5000+ homes lost power
- SH closures, school closed, infrastructure damages,

2026**Severe weather (Jan)**

- 10 fatalities
- Flooding and landslips
- 2 States of Emergency
- \$2.2m Government relief package
- 80+ people evacuated

22 State of Emergencies

in 2026 alone,
with 127 days declared
at a local or regional level.

\$462 million

average annual cost
spent on repairing
critical infrastructure
as a result of flooding

2019**Hiding in plain sight**

Tonkin + Taylor report
documenting extent
and value of flood
protection schemes in
Aotearoa New Zealand

2018

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT CHALLENGES

The challenges identified in the 2021 Before the Deluge business case (and its refresh) are not new; they are echoed again in Te Waihanga's National Infrastructure Plan.

A huge portion of the country's flood resilience schemes were originally built around late 1950s and 1970s to drive economic development, shaped by local landowners who contributed land and agreed – sometimes formally, sometimes not – on how these assets would be managed. Those arrangements matched the realities of their time: simpler land use, fewer regulatory constraints and a far narrower set of expectations but so much has changed since.

Today, flood resilience infrastructure does far more than protect local landowners. It underpins communities, productive land, businesses, public assets, nationally significant infrastructure, and future investment – everything we need to prosper as a nation.

However, our ageing flood resilience infrastructure is facing pressure from all sides: climate change, affordability, legislation requirements, and land use change. Individually each of these pressures presents a significant challenge, but the reality is they are interlinked and experienced simultaneously, meaning they cannot be treated as separate issues. As a consequence, the cost of maintaining, renewing and upgrading flood resilience infrastructure is increasing, while the ability of local communities to absorb those costs is becoming more constrained.

Understanding these challenges exposes the limitation of the current funding model, and why it is critical to have a new approach aligned with the time now and the future.

The following pages sets out the five key pressures shaping the path ahead.



Climate change



Insurance retreat



Legislation



Affordability



Cost and benefits

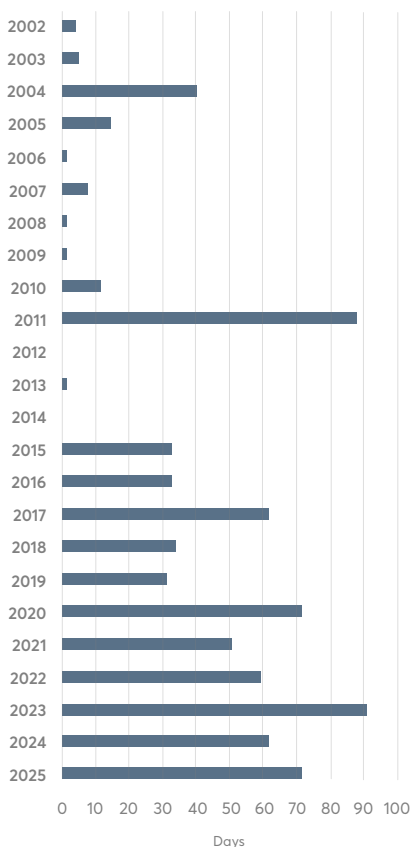
NEW ZEALAND IS IN A PERPETUAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

Flood resilience in the country is being shaped by a cluster of pressures growing in scale and complexity.

**\$235
billion**

property value at risk of
of inland flooding

Civil Defence-listed regional states of emergency since 2022



**25 States of
Emergency**

as of July 2026,

with 137 declared days
at a local or
regional level

"If tomorrow's extreme events exceed historic records more often, infrastructure designed for those past conditions may no longer be enough to protect people and property."

– The University of Waikato (2026)

Looking at 2026 so far, January's tropical low and February's storm delivered some of the most extreme rainfall totals in Aotearoa's history. One-in-100-year coastal floods are now happening twice a year in Wellington, such as the eleven metre swell seen on April. More of these catastrophic events are expected to batter Aotearoa New Zealand in the coming years.

As global temperatures rise, the atmosphere can hold more water vapour, increasing the likelihood of heavier rainfall during storms. Flooding is already one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most frequent, damaging, and disruptive natural hazards; hence, as the climate changes, flooding caused by both increased rainfall and rising sea levels – in coastal areas and on floodplains – is expected to increase.

Indeed, these were the findings of recent research by the University of Waikato, which also found large increases under both moderate- and high-emissions scenarios, extreme rainfall is projected to become more frequent and more intense, particularly for the most severe single-day rainfall events. By the late twenty-first century, up to half of the locations analysed could experience historically rare rainfall events occurring two to three times more often than they do today; however, this will vary region-by-region due to differences in geography, weather patterns and climate variability. Future extreme rainfall events are also expected to resemble some of Aotearoa New Zealand's most damaging storms, including Cyclone Bola and the 1923 Canterbury storm, but with greater rainfall intensity.

Moreover, research in Dunedin found that worsening flooding during heavy rainfall is linked to rising sea levels, as higher groundwater levels reduce the land's ability to absorb water. This occurs because the ocean is connected to groundwater systems beneath coastal towns, cities, and floodplains. As sea levels rise, groundwater levels can also rise far inland, meaning that in some areas the first sign of sea level rise may be water coming up through the ground rather than over the coast. As a result, soil absorption is reduced thereby increasing flood risk during storm events; therefore, even those not living by the coast should be concerned about rising sea levels. Over 65% of New Zealanders live within five kilometres of the coast, and more than half a million buildings are already exposed to inland flooding, with at least \$235 billion at risk.

Graham Leonard, principal scientist at Earth Sciences New Zealand, states that as a country, we need to start planning 50 or even 100 years ahead when mapping hazards and building infrastructure. Without change, the country will keep facing repeated damage to the same infrastructure, leading to "rebuild- and-repeat" costs it can't afford.

EXISTING INSURANCE APPROACHES HAVE LIMITS

Rising insurance premiums are not simply a market response – they are an economic indicator of increasing climate risk and the growing cost of deferred investment in resilience.

Inflation adjusted insurance costs for flood and storm events

70% of flood and storm costs since 1965 were incurred in last 10 years (\$m)



Source: ICNZ / Tower Insurance via Newswire (2022)

916%

increase in house insurance since 2000

40%

increase in house insurance in the last 2 years

256%

increase in weather-related A&S insurance claims between Mar 25 to Feb 26

Aotearoa New Zealand's framework for managing natural hazard risk is fragmented, under-resourced, and falling behind the pace at which those risks are growing – and without structural reform, the consequences will extend to insurance availability, public finances, and long-term economic stability.

Excerpt from the New Zealand report: A long-term approach to natural hazard risk reduction

According to the 2026 Treasury review of household insurance affordability, home insurance premiums have risen 40% in the last two years and grown at three times the rate of general inflation since 2011. This review comes as AA Insurance temporarily paused new home insurance offers in Westport due to flood risk. Consumer New Zealand recently described the situation as “serious” and called for urgent government action, citing concerns about both affordability and the way the market is functioning.

While attribution is not solely on climate change, Insurance Council of New Zealand (ICNZ) Chief Executive Kris Faafoi states that it plays a key role, warning that insurance challenges will continue without action to reduce climate risk. Increase in insurance premiums are driven by two key factors:

- Insurance is a way of pricing and pooling risk. When the expected frequency or severity of loss increases, private insurers tend to raise premiums.
- Aotearoa New Zealand also relies heavily on offshore reinsurance to manage catastrophic risk. In recent years, global reinsurance markets have tightened after large losses abroad. Higher reinsurance costs are often passed on to domestic premiums, along with higher repair cost and regulation costs due to inflation.

Aotearoa New Zealand's natural hazards protection system is built on private home insurance. Homeowners who insure privately automatically receive statutory natural hazards cover through the Natural Hazards Commission.

This means the entire system relies on the assumption that most households can continue to obtain and afford private insurance. As premiums rise and access becomes more constrained, that assumption begins to weaken. Without private insurance, homeowners also lose access to statutory natural hazards cover, increasing pressure on the Crown guarantee to either expand public support or fund a greater share of disaster recovery through taxpayers.

Insurance affordability is therefore not simply a market issue – it is a structural issue that affects the long-term affordability and fiscal sustainability of Aotearoa New Zealand's natural hazards protection system. Reducing flood risk through flood resilience infrastructure supports insurance affordability and availability, reducing pressure on the Crown and, ultimately, taxpayers, to step in as 234 insurer and funder of last resort.

Climate change



More tropical cyclones



Increased storm surges



Sea level rise



More extreme weather



Increased rainfall intensity



First layer of protection

Infrastructure

Flood infrastructure is paid for by property / land owners that the specific scheme protects through predominantly targeted rates and some through general rates.

This model is known as a 'beneficiary-pays' model.

This beneficiary-pays approach can create affordability challenges, particularly where small communities face high costs to protect against major flood risks.

Flood resilience infrastructure



Infrastructure is paid through a beneficiary model, or those who have property or land that the scheme directly and/or indirectly protects.

With increasing climate change events, outdated infrastructure built decades ago is under strain. This means it requires more work, and therefore money, to meet the Level of Service required to protect the



Second layer of protection

Insurance

Natural Hazards Insurance (NHI) levy helps fund insurance for houses and land in the event of certain natural hazards, including floods and storms.

Only those with private insurance are eligible for this fund.

Generally, the first \$300,000 plus GST towards repairing or replacing your home is provided by the Natural Hazards Commission.

Private insurers pay the rest of any claim for any damage to your home up to the amount agreed in insurance policy.

Natural Hazard Cover



Government-backed natural disaster insurance. Paid by all insured homeowners through a compulsory flat levy (NHI) automatically added to private insurance

Ongoing costs are about \$650-750 million a year for operating expense, reinsurance premiums, and small claims.

Recognising the looming disasters about to hit the country in the next few years, Treasury has proposed increasing the levy at three different levels. This is currently under review.

Treasury projects it will be underfunded by about 34% over its first five years, meaning levy income and investment returns are unlikely to cover expected claims over that period.



About 40% of insurance premium paid by property owners go towards tax and levies

Higher flood risks generally relate to:

- higher access for flood claims
- sub-limit for the amount of flood cover available
- blanket exclusion for flood cover

Increase of disasters, and consequently, payouts increases means higher reinsurance costs for our insurers. These costs are often passed on to domestic premiums, along with higher replacement costs.

Private insurance



Insurance transfers the financial risk of damage from homeowners and businesses to an insurer in exchange for a premium

Reinsurance



Reinsurance is the insurance for insurance companies. Insurers pay a premium to global reinsurers, who help cover the cost of major disasters that would otherwise be too large for a single insurer to absorb



The final layer of protection

Crown

Once the Natural Hazard Cover and private insurance and international reinsurance are exhausted after catastrophic event, the remaining costs fall to the Government's balance sheet – and ultimately taxpayers

Crown guarantee



Statutory natural disaster scheme with an unlimited Crown guarantee

Insurance unaffordability leads to underfunding, and underfunding means either higher levies in future – something already signalled by Treasury – or greater reliance on the Crown guarantee in major events. Either way, costs ultimately fall back to the public.

Based on modelling done by Treasury, the natural hazards cover will be insufficient for the incoming disasters. Crown-funded bailout is not something the Government wants or can afford.

Against this backdrop, flood resilience is not another cost – it is one of the key solutions. It reduces expected losses, stabilises insurance affordability over time, and strengthens the entire risk-sharing system. In doing so, it protects every other form of public and private capital, while reducing pressure on both future levies and the Government's balance sheet.

New policies temporary halts in Westport

Westport demonstrates that insurance retreat is no longer a future risk – it is already occurring in Aotearoa New Zealand. Following repeated flooding, including the 2021 event that left more than 100 homes uninhabitable, AA Insurance announced in late 2025 that it would temporarily stop offering new home, landlord and business insurance policies across the Westport postcode, while continuing to cover existing customers.

The decision was driven by elevated flood risk and AA Insurance reaching its maximum exposure limit in the area. AA Insurance indicated it would resume offering new policies if flood risk was reduced below its exposure.

The decision reflects a growing shift in how insurers respond to escalating climate risk. Rather than relying solely on higher premiums, insurers are increasingly limiting their exposure in areas where flood risk exceeds their appetite.

The insurer's transparency is appreciated, and also represented a "shift" in approach in Aotearoa New Zealand, where insurers had been reluctant to publicise areas they were no longer insuring.

The temporary halt is interpreted by experts as the insurer pushing for an investment in flood defences, from either local or central government.

Flood resilience work is underway in Westport. The West Coast Regional Council and Buller District Council planned to update insurers – who will visit the town at the end of February – as different stages of the flood resilience scheme were completed.

Victoria University emeritus professor Jonathan Boston, who was part of a previous government expert working group on climate

adaptation, said AA Insurance's decision was just the first of many to come.

"There will be more and more situations in which insurers, understandably, say the risks are too great to provide insurance, even with very large excesses, and will pull out."

Experts noted that Suncorp (AA Insurance's parent company) has previously used similar approaches in Australia, withdrawing or restricting insurance on the condition that massive investment in flood resilience is taken. More insurers are expected to adopt similar approaches as climate risks increases.

Insurance retreat also raises broader governance questions. As insurers withdraw or restrict cover in high-risk areas, their decisions may increasingly influence where public investment is prioritised, shifting decision-making away from councils and communities towards private insurers and global reinsurance markets.

AA Insurance's withdrawal from new policies in Westport brought the issue of insurance retreat into the spotlight, reinforcing concerns reflected in subsequent Treasury analysis of rising insurance costs and the proposed increase to Aotearoa New Zealand's natural hazard insurance levy. As insurance coverage declines, the base over which the natural hazard levy is applied may also shrink, reducing the scale of pooled funding available for disaster recovery and increasing reliance on Crown-backed support when major events occur.

This programme aligns with the direction signalled by insurers: invest in reducing flood risk before disasters occur, rather than continuing to absorb the costs of escalating costs of disasters.



INSURANCE RETREAT IS A MAJOR CROWN LIABILITY

Insurance withdrawal in the face of growing flood risks is a strategic challenge for Aotearoa New Zealand.

10,000

coastal homes
potential full insurance
withdrawal by 2040

750,000

people at risk of
flooding and coastal
inundation

>282,000

houses at risk
of flooding and
coastal inundation

Insurance retreat is already seen in some areas of the country. Unbundling flood cover from standard home policies, as seen in Australia, may also become a reality here.

Alongside rising insurance premiums, insurance retreat is emerging in some parts of Aotearoa New Zealand as insurers respond to increasing climate-related risks. People in areas prone to floods and earthquakes such as West Coast, Canterbury, are finding it difficult to get home insurance. Some people with beachhouse property worth millions of dollars are having a hard time getting renewals from insurers.

And this is the uncomfortable reality: Aotearoa New Zealand is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to natural hazards. The Climate Change Commission has estimated 750,000 people and nearly half a million properties are at risk from climate-related events such as flooding and coastal inundation. On top of this, we have the ninth longest coastline in the world, with a significant proportion of our communities are built on flood plains or flood-prone areas.

Recent research by the Helen Clark Foundation also estimated that more than 10,000 coastal houses across Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin may potentially experience full insurance withdrawal by 2050. And this may also apply to those living in flood-prone areas. In some cases, the level of flood risk may be too high or unprofitable for re/insurers to underwrite, making insurance unaffordable and/or restricted in certain regions (partial retreat) or creating 'no-go' zones where insurance companies fully retreat from providing coverage.

However, full insurance retreat is not the only risk. As seen in Australia, insurers have also responded by unbundling flood cover from standard home insurance policies, requiring homeowners to purchase flood insurance separately or excluding certain types of flood damage altogether. Given Aotearoa New Zealand's two largest insurers are Australian-owned, there is a real possibility that similar approaches could emerge here in Aotearoa New Zealand. ICNZ Chief Executive Kris Faafoi has acknowledged that flood cover could eventually be carved out of standard policies if a long-term climate adaptation framework is not established.

Whether through higher premiums, reduced cover, or complete withdrawal, the direction of travel is the same: unaddressed flood risks leads to increased costs across the system which ultimately falls back on taxpayers, reinforcing the need to reduce our country's most common and costly natural hazard risk at its source through sustained investment in flood resilience.

THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR FLOOD RESILIENCE

Where national policy settings drive investment requirements, it is reasonable that the costs of meeting those requirements are shared between central and local government.

Emergency Management Bill – new responsibilities, same funding model

The proposed Emergency Management Bill – recently passed its second reading as of the 30th June 2026 – aims strengthen national resilience by expanding and clarifying responsibilities of central government, local government, emergency services, iwi, lifeline utilities, businesses and communities across all phases of emergency management.

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) estimates implementation will cost councils **\$82.8 million over four years**, excluding the cost of meeting higher service standards, with no dedicated funding mechanism provided.

On top of this, Government has also **proposed rates cap** would further limit councils' ability to meet expanding responsibilities within the existing funding constraints.

The issue is no longer just the amount of funding – it is that the funding model is becoming increasingly misaligned with the responsibilities councils are expected to fulfil.

The funding model must also evolve to recognise these are increasingly national – not solely local – outcomes.

Councils are increasingly being asked to deliver outcomes that extend well beyond traditional flood resilience and support wider national objectives; therefore, the funding model must evolve accordingly.

Flood resilience sits within one of the most complex and multi-layered legislative environments in the local government sector, as defined by the Crown. Councils are required to protect communities and manage major river systems under several pieces of legislation that assigns clear responsibilities, sets environmental safeguards, and dictates how schemes must be funded and operated.

National legislation	Relevance to flood resilience
Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941	Gives councils the core legal duty to build, operate and maintain flood resilience and drainage works to prevent or mitigate flooding and erosion
Local Government Act 2002	Requires councils to plan, fund and manage flood assets prudently and transparently through long-term, sustainable decision-making
Local Government (Rating) Act 2022	Sets out the lawful mechanisms for how councils can levy rates, including the use of targeted rates to fund flood resilience and drainage schemes
Resource Management Act 1991 (incl. NPS & NES)	Regulates how councils carry out river works and drainage activities, ensuring they protect freshwater, wetlands and environmental values
Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2022	Requires councils to identify flood hazards, provide warnings and support regional emergency responses to flooding
Climate Change Response Act & National Adaptation Framework	Requires councils to incorporate climate projections into flood-scheme planning and future-proof major infrastructure
District Council Functions (under the RMA)	Territorial authorities control land use in flood-prone areas, and must integrate the council's flood hazard information into their planning decisions
Public Works Act 1981	Enables councils to acquire land rights necessary for constructing and maintaining flood resilience infrastructure

Since 2021, more than 15 relevant Acts have been amended or introduced, with further change expected as central government resets national policy direction. Each legislative shift raises the standards councils must meet – tighter environmental requirements, more complex compliance obligations and new performance expectations. The requirement to retrofit fish passage on pump stations, introduced through several freshwater regulations, is one example of how a single regulatory change can reshape both design and cost.

Legislation is now actively influencing how assets are renewed and replaced. Like-for-like upgrades no longer pass muster on their own. These considerations improve outcomes but also change the scale, timing and cost structure of asset management. As central government continues to expand the outcomes expected from flood resilience schemes, there is a corresponding need for a funding model that reflects this shared responsibility.

SUSTAINING LEVELS OF SERVICE, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

Statutory requirements must be converted into clear Levels of Service (LoS), resulting in investment and coordinated work that keeps communities protected.

The Audit Office observations from council's 2024-34 LTPs

Financial forecasts from LTPs

Councils propose to spend 34% more on their assets during 2024-34 than they proposed in their 2021-31 LTPs

Revenue to increase by 47%



Operating expenditure to increase by 43%

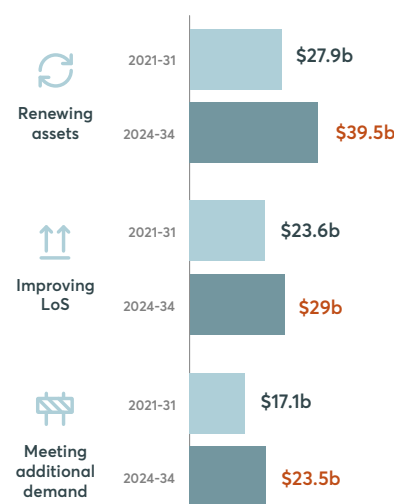


Debt to increase



Financial capital expenditure

Comparisons between the 2021-31 and 2024-34 LTPs are between the same 58 councils that completed the 2024-34 LTPs



There is a growing gap between infrastructure investment required to maintain intended Levels of Service and what councils can sustainably fund.

Turning those statutory duties into real flood resilience on the ground demands a disciplined internal system that links national direction to regional strategy, operational planning and day-to-day asset management.

A council's Long-Term Plan (LTP) sets out the activities it will undertake over the next 10 years, including flood resilience, along with the intended Level of Service (LoS) for each activity. For flood resilience, the LoS defines the level of protection the council intends to provide, typically expressed as the ability to manage floods of a specified likelihood, such as a one-in-50-year or one-in-100-year event. These levels may vary depending on land use and risk.

Periodic reviews are necessary because sustaining LoS demands more than routine upkeep – it requires a deliberate, long-view approach to managing the councils' flood resilience network, with an investment programme to match. Although councils are not required to regularly reassess the appropriateness of their intended LoS, they are expected to deliver the LoS they commit to in their LTP. Failure to do so may expose councils to legal liability if flood damage occurs that could reasonably have been mitigated by achieving the intended LoS.

According to the Audit Office (2025), climate change, rising operating costs and the need to increase capital expenditure, and funding constraints are making it increasingly difficult for councils to maintain their agreed LoS. As a result, they face difficult trade-offs such as:

- maintaining existing assets versus investing in new infrastructure;
- protecting all communities equally versus prioritising the highest-risk areas;
- increasing rates versus accepting lower levels of flood resilience; and
- investing now to reduce future risk versus responding after flood events occur.

These competing priorities can and have resulted in councils deferring maintenance, slowing asset renewals, or postponing capital projects to manage affordability. In response, councils are increasing rates at historically high levels. To pay for much-needed investment in infrastructure, councils are also increasing their debt to some of the highest levels in decades.

As a result, some councils are close to or exceeding their debt limits. Part of this pressure reflects the ongoing cost of response and recovery after major flood events, thus strengthening our argument that proactive investment in flood resilience can reduce long-term recovery expenditure and debt growth.



Wairoa 2023 flooding: targeted rating

Before the Deluge 3.0 7.5 b

Wairoa suffered devastating floods during Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023, with a total of 816 properties covering 378ha partially or completely flooded during the cyclone.

Following the floods, the report of the Hawke's Bay Independent Flood Review noted the known historic risk to flood-prone areas of Wairoa, and identified that a plan to address these following Cyclone Bola in 1988 was not progressed due to affordability constraints. The report noted that in the 1990s the Hawke's Bay Regional Council embarked on developing a Floodplain Management Plan for Wairoa that included stop bank options and recognised the importance of flood warnings and evacuations.

"However, due to affordability constraints, none of the stop banking proposals was progressed, leaving the North Clyde community exposed to flooding from events greater than a 20-year flood and reliant on flood warnings and evacuations to manage its safety," the report said.

The ability of the Wairoa community to fund the required infrastructure was the constraining factor on the flood resilience works proceeding. Under the rating system in place at the time, the cost of any flood mitigation would have needed to be funded by Wairoa ratepayers.

"The proposal was assessed as unaffordable for the community, the proposal was not adopted and therefore no operating flood control scheme exists today," the Hawkes Bay Regional Council said. Since Cyclone Gabrielle, the council said it had recognised "the limitation of a targeted rating approach on the ability of smaller, less prosperous local communities to achieve the protection of a flood control scheme".

Resolving the flood resilience funding gap has required a \$70m capital investment by the Crown, on top of the tens of millions of dollars in uninsured losses, response and recovery costs already incurred by the government following Cyclone Gabrielle.

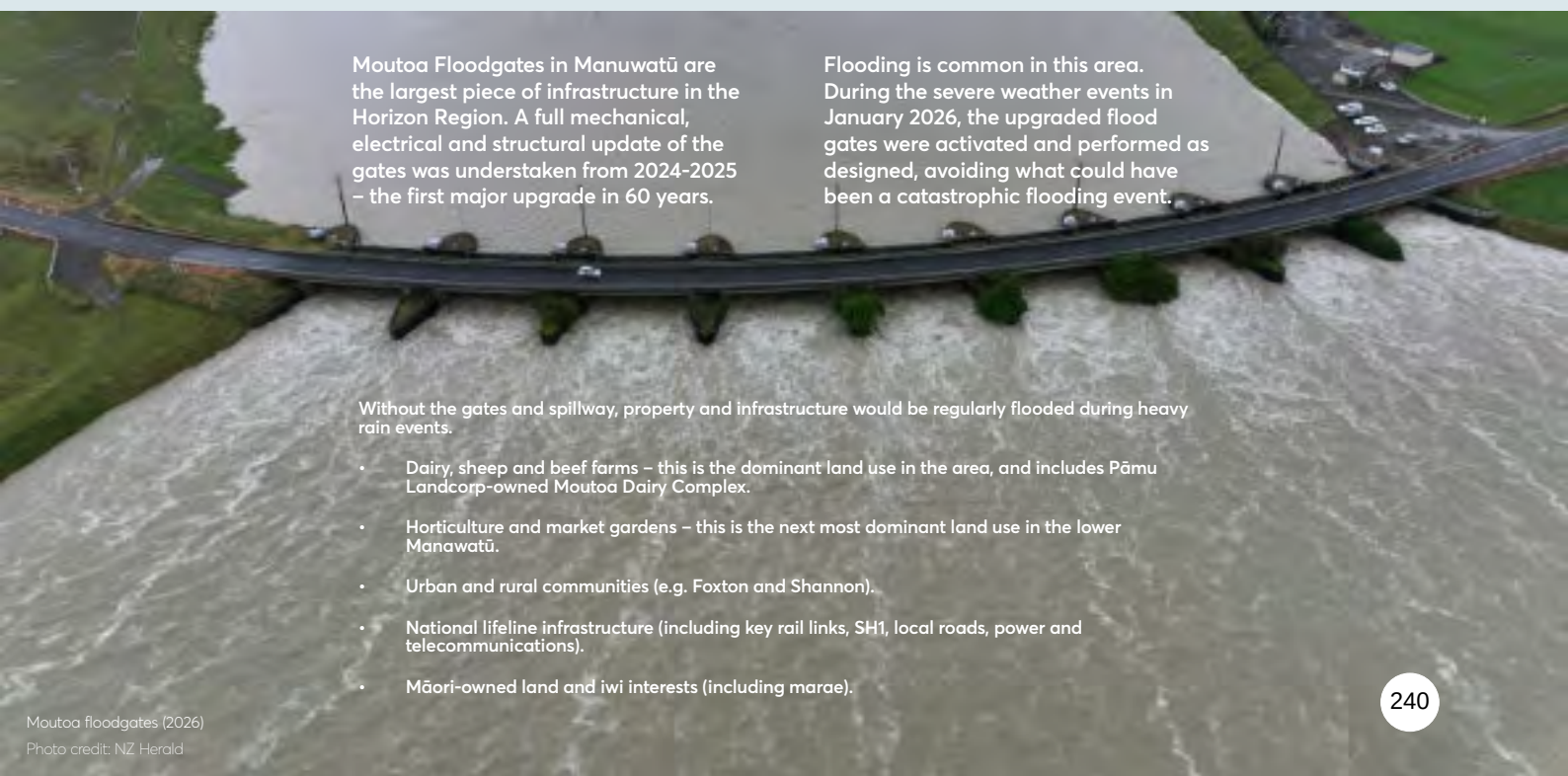
"If we don't act, costs could run into the billions and affect every part of people's lives.

Communities are already doing the hard work locally – now we need to make sure the national settings are right to back that up. A lot of effort goes into recovery, which matters – but it can't come at the expense of making things more resilient.

We currently have an imbalance where 97% of government spend is on responding to natural hazards and only 3% on building resilience.

By getting it right at the national level, and turning our focus to building climate resilience, we can break the cycle of react and recover."

– Jo Hendy, Climate Change Commission Chief Executive



Moutoa Floodgates in Manawatū are the largest piece of infrastructure in the Horizon Region. A full mechanical, electrical and structural update of the gates was undertaken from 2024-2025 – the first major upgrade in 60 years.

Flooding is common in this area. During the severe weather events in January 2026, the upgraded flood gates were activated and performed as designed, avoiding what could have been a catastrophic flooding event.

Without the gates and spillway, property and infrastructure would be regularly flooded during heavy rain events.

- Dairy, sheep and beef farms – this is the dominant land use in the area, and includes Pāmu Landcorp-owned Moutoa Dairy Complex.
- Horticulture and market gardens – this is the next most dominant land use in the lower Manawatū.
- Urban and rural communities (e.g. Foxton and Shannon).
- National lifeline infrastructure (including key rail links, SH1, local roads, power and telecommunications).
- Māori-owned land and iwi interests (including marae).

COSTS AND BENEFITS ARE NOT WELL MATCHED

The mismatch between who pays and who benefits is becoming one of the central challenges in flood resilience.

Assets exposed to flooding due to rainfall events across Aotearoa New Zealand

Buildings value



Current climate	\$215 billion
1° warmer	\$254 billion
2° warmer	\$272 billion
3° warmer	\$288 billion

Roads



Current climate	26,800 kms
1° warmer	28,300 kms
2° warmer	29,500 kms
3° warmer	30,800 kms

Stormwater pipelines



Current climate	14,900 kms
1° warmer	16,600 kms
2° warmer	15,000 kms
3° warmer	15,400 kms

Electricity sites

e.g. National grid, substations



Current climate	27%
1° warmer	25%
2° warmer	26%
3° warmer	25%

As the benefits of flood resilience become more broadly shared, so should the responsibility for funding it.

Flood resilience delivers significant value nationwide, yet the benefits are not evenly shared. Some areas depend on engineered defences to remain viable, while others experience only indirect advantages such as reduced disruption to transport routes, supply chains or regional services. This uneven distribution makes equity a core issue: who gains from the system, who pays for it, and how should those contributions be structured?

Councils fund the flood resilience infrastructure through a "beneficiary pays" model. Most of this is from targeted rates for the community or people owning land that a specific scheme protects, with some from general rates from property owners and businesses. However, under this model because of legislations, the Crown as a major beneficiary has not contributed in proportion to the protection flood resilience infrastructure provides their assets, aside from episodic co-investment over the past five years.

"Central government has a direct stake in managing flood risk. As the largest infrastructure owner and investor, it benefits when communities and assets such as state highways, schools, and hospitals are better protected. Consistent, stable expectations, and clear co-funding settings all influence whether councils can act early or are left responding after disasters."

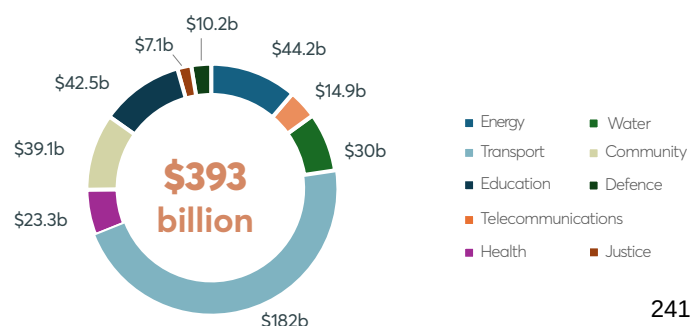
— National Infrastructure Plan, 2026

As of 2025, the Crown's total asset value is at \$598 billion, with \$292.6 billion making up the property, plant, and equipment. Looking solely at infrastructure, the Crown owns almost 44% of critical infrastructure worth more than \$393 billion in 2024, excluding Kainga Ora housing and forestry.

Crown assets accounts for 45% of our total stock of critical infrastructure, and almost half of all infrastructure investment each year.

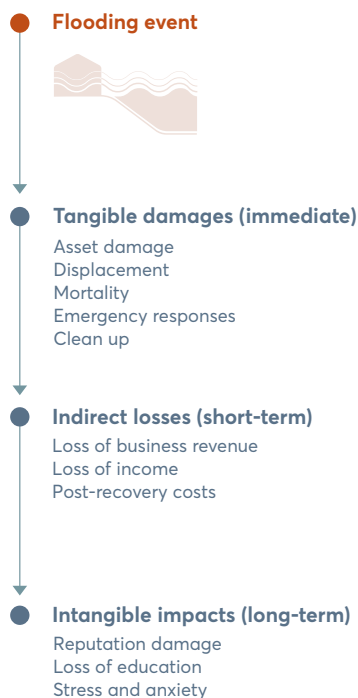
Value of Aotearoa New Zealand's critical infrastructure assets (2024)

44%
owned by
central
government



THE BENEFITS TO THE CROWN ARE SIGNIFICANT

There are significant savings to be made by the Crown by investing in protection rather than recovery.



The size of the risk to Aotearoa New Zealand's economic and social infrastructure from major flooding events is significant, with damage able to reach into the billions of dollars – as was the case with Cyclones Gabrielle and Hale in 2023.

This means the fiscal benefits to the nation from flood resilience are high. According to analysis undertaken by New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) in 2021, the benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of flood resilience is at least 5:1, which means that every dollar invested returns \$5 in direct economic benefit through avoided loss. If we take into account the indirect and social benefits to businesses and communities, the benefits are even greater.

The Crown is also a direct beneficiary of investment in flood resilience infrastructure. Under the Local Government Act, councils are required to consider who benefits from infrastructure when determining how costs are apportioned. Given the significant fiscal and economic benefits that accrue nationally through avoided disaster recovery costs, protected public infrastructure, and reduced disruption to economic activity, there is a strong rationale for Crown investment alongside local government. In this context, the Crown is exposed to the fiscal impacts of flooding in a number of ways:

1. Crown infrastructure – including roads, schools, hospitals, and many other asset classes – is exposed to flood damage.
2. The Crown is the primary funder of recovery costs, as shown by 2023 weather events which costed the Government around \$6.65 billion, where national resources were mobilised to provide immediate assistance and support to affected communities and businesses.
3. The Crown becomes the insurer of last resort when flood damage exceeds commercial insurance cover and the assets are nationally important, even where the asset may not be owned directly by the Crown. Essential land remediation after a major flooding event is an example.
4. The Crown bears the long-term fiscal impacts of social and economic disruption, with social welfare costs from displacement, income support, health and education impacts, and much more. Research following Cyclone Gabrielle shows that these effects can last for years after the disaster.
5. The Crown also bears the impact of post-flood economic disruption, expressed as lower tax revenues from businesses and individuals.

Future for Local Government Review Panel (2023)

The Panel's recommendations on the theme "increasing funding":

- 14 Central Government pays rates on Crown property.
- 16 Cabinet is required to consider the funding impact on local government of proposed policy decisions.

This independent review was initiated 2021 in response to growing concerns that Aotearoa New Zealand's local government system was not equipped to meet long-term challenges such as climate change, infrastructure investment, demographic change and community wellbeing.

The review examined whether councils' roles, governance arrangements and funding mechanisms remained fit for purpose in the next 30 years, including how responsibilities and costs for climate adaptation and flood resilience should be shared between local and central government.

The recommendations are on the table. The Crown must now act on them.

Investment in flood resilience is therefore a sensible and prudent step for the Crown to take, in order to decrease the immediate and long-term impacts of major flood events. Doing so – putting money into prevention rather than recovery – brings us into line with our OECD peers, who tend to invest to a greater level than Aotearoa New Zealand does in the first lines of defence against the most common natural disaster.

Strategic priorities

Alignment with our programme

- Build a stronger, more productive economy that lifts real incomes and expands opportunity for New Zealanders
 - Deliver more efficient, effective, and responsive public services
 - Restore discipline to public spending and strengthen the Government's financial position
-
- Reduce vulnerability, enhance adaptive capacity, and strengthen resilience over the long term
 - Identify key climate-related risks for preparation
 - Implement the first national adaptation plan (2022–2028)
 - Improve risk-informed decisions and climate-resilient development in appropriate locations
 - Develop strategies and tools to understand and respond to climate risks (including managed retreat)
 - Embed climate resilience across government systems
-
- Plan within what is affordable
 - Prioritise the most critical infrastructure projects
 - Maintain and renew existing assets
 - Streamline processes to enable better infrastructure delivery
-
- Translate and share hazard risk data to reduce current and future risk
 - Strengthen leadership, policy, and governance in hazard risk management
 - Lead and support risk reduction decision-making and action
 - Promote innovative, world-leading approaches to risk reduction in New Zealand
-
- Maintain accessible and available insurance markets
 - Collaborate to reduce the natural hazard protection gap through resilience investment
 - Ensure regulation is coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective
-
- Strengthen planning, resilience investment, risk information, and clarify funding and responsibilities
 - Align legislation and expand funding to support resilience and managed retreat
 - Improve infrastructure resilience and support large-scale adaptation (including relocation and withdrawal from high-risk areas)

Government Budget (2026)

Flood resilience infrastructure contributes to our economic stability and productivity by reducing disruptions, protecting critical infrastructure, business continuity, and stronger productivity.

It also reduces long-term exposure to emergency and reconstruction costs, strengthening the Government's position through lower lifetime expenditure and more targeted, forward-looking investment.

National Adaptation Plan

Our proposed national platform (more on Section 4) combines local and national datasets to enable flood modelling, scenario modelling, valuation for cost-benefit analyses, and project prioritisation modelling using PARA framework.

This provides a consistent national picture of flood hazards across catchments to show flood extent, depth, and frequency and future conditions and their likely impacts and costs using the PARA framework.

Infrastructure Commission | National Infrastructure Plan (2026)

Our proposed national platform enables consistent, policy-aligned prioritisation of projects based on transparent cost-benefit assessment. Projects focus on upgrading existing infrastructure to maintain performance under increasing climate-driven flood risk. The pipeline also provides delivery certainty, supporting stronger planning, sector capability, and more efficient project execution.

Natural Hazards Commission | Risk Reduction Strategy (2025–29)

The coordinated national approach via Te Uru Kahika and the national platform will put Aotearoa New Zealand at the forefront of national responses to growing flood risks in a climate changing world.

Sectoral coordination through Te Uru Kahika is leading to a more informed and coordinated national pipeline, including data and knowledge sharing, and a national prioritisation methodology.

ICNZ Strategic priorities

Having a shared national platform that provides consistent data on flood vulnerability, levels of service, planned infrastructure upgrades, and the costs and benefits of flood risk resilience will enable all stakeholders to work with common data and assumptions.

Improved infrastructure assurance and upgrades to levels of service should result in the insurance industry offering more affordable insurance premiums with a greater degree of long-term predictability.

IAG NZ | Long-term approach to natural hazard risk reduction (2026)

The national pipeline of projects improves infrastructure resilience, increases the funding available to protect communities and businesses, and sets out a cost-benefit framework for assessing whether alternative options such as managed retreat are financially and logistically viable.

The prioritised pipeline of infrastructure upgrades planned over the next 30 years provides certainty for landowners and the insurance sector alike.

PERSPECTIVES: FUNDING THE FUTURE



I'm Shaun McCracken, and I'm the Chief Engineer for Environment Canterbury's infrastructure – and we've certainly got a lot of that. I work closely with my colleagues, particularly David Aires, who's one of the River Managers.

I think our most pressing issue is deciding as a country, as a community, what frequency of flooding is acceptable and plotting a pathway to how we're going to get there. And importantly, how we're going to fund that. Because the funding has to match the level of service needed for the frequency and scale of flooding, and the level of expectation from our communities.

As David puts it, "Building flood resilience is not just about infrastructure – it is about building knowledge, capability, and trust over time. That requires a stable funding pipeline." That really gets to the heart of the challenge.

Our big issue on the Canterbury plains is that the infrastructure is not going to be affordable for those communities. Just maintaining the status quo of what we've got is becoming more expensive every year, just because the weather events keep getting bigger. So we have conversations with communities to talk about the work that we're doing and the money we need to collect from them to do it, and we can see the financial stress that's already causing for people and businesses.

If we put a proposal in front of them that says, we need to upgrade the scheme and we want to increase your rates by double-digits to achieve that, it's a big increase, and so we receive pushback, which is just natural for any big change in a regular cost.

But if we look at it and ask, is it a good investment or the best use of those folks' available money to do that? In many cases the answer is yes, the protection schemes are very good value for money compared to the costs of flooding. But that doesn't take away from all the other financial pressures that every landowner has, whether it's a rural property or an urban property.

So right now, the current paradigm is largely dictated by the community's ability to pay. Now, in some cases, that has really positive outcomes, like for the Waimakariri River near Christchurch. The city is a major beneficiary and the ability to pay is quite high, both because of population and wealth. And the amount you're paying may only be a few dollars a year.

We can contrast that with the Rangitata scheme where there are 70 or 80 mostly rural landowners, who contribute to the funding of that scheme. And their annual bill for their property is \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year, which is just a totally different financial burden.

Some regions are bridging the gap by moving away from the targeted schemes into a general rate, whether it's the whole region or part of the region, to effectively amalgamate all the schemes into one. But to do that, we have to have a public conversation to explain why my house in Christchurch gets flooded less often than Rob's house in Rangitata, and how sharing the financial cost is still fair.

Ultimately, we can't fix this just in Canterbury. We need to work out a fair way for the costs of the schemes we have and the schemes we need to be shared across the whole community, because when the big rains come we're all in this together, whether it's our houses flooded or not.

David Aires | Rivers Manager
Environment Canterbury

Shaun McCracken | Chief Engineer – Infrastructure
Environment Canterbury

2

Investing for the future



Tairāwhiti rural flooding (2023)
Photo credit: Gisborne District Council

THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN COLLABORATIVE

In response to the emerging issues in flood resilience, a co-investment approach has developed.

"River management, flood protection, and waste services should be explicitly included as essential infrastructure."

– Local Government New Zealand submission on Emergency Management Bill

Our national response to the COVID pandemic provided the starting point for co-investment in flood resilience infrastructure, and led to a series of investment tranches delivered via Kānoa. This has begun addressing the infrastructure deficit that had built up in the preceding decades as communities began to reach the limits of flood scheme affordability.

Starting with the post-COVID recovery funding, there have been three tranches of co-investment totalling \$658m over five years, with a 60%/40% split between the Crown and councils. And as a result of the Government's episodic investments in flood resilience, much has been achieved and disasters have been averted. Essential flood resilience projects across the country have been progressed, and the impact of the co-investment tranches is discussed in more detail in the following pages.

Following the success of these projects, Te Uru Kahika has put forward the latest tranche of co-investment totalling \$370 million. This tranche extends to longer-term projects that extend investment from remedying immediate issues into building long-term flood resilience. Work is continuing with Ministers and officials to progress this next phase.

This is because the challenge is no longer getting started – it is maintaining momentum. The country requires a long-term national commitment to flood resilience, backed by enduring Crown co-funding and a coordinated national approach to keep pace with growing flood risk and avoid much greater costs in the future.

And while co-investment started as part of our national recovery from the pandemic, subsequent work – by councils, the Infrastructure Commission, research bodies, and other government agencies – has demonstrated the high return on investment that is achieved through investing in flood resilience. The analysis demonstrates that the returns from providing communities and businesses and the rural sector with greater flood resilience are significantly higher than the majority of other high-profile infrastructure projects.

There is a strong fiscal and economic and social rationale for continued investment and long-term certainty in flood risk resilience, and this is discussed in more detail on the following pages.



Mechanical flood gates at Criterion Bridge, Paeroa, installed in 2018, prevented flooding the state highway, homes, schools, and farmlands during a heavy rain event in the year (2023). Photo credit: Waikato Regional Council

Post-COVID



Tranche 1



Tranche 2



Tranche 3
(Proposed)



Council co-investment

\$96

Crown co-investment

\$217

\$312 m

55 projects



Official opening of the stopbank along
Tūtaekuri in Taradale Napier.
Photo credit: Resilient River Communities



POST-COVID FUNDING PROVIDED THE START

In 2021, Kānoa invested \$217 million into 55 flood resilience projects nationally as part of the government's COVID-19 recovery programme.



5,297 ha

catchments with protected fish-safe pathways created



835 ha

wetlands created or enhanced



8,642 ha

of community resilience



653

local jobs created



\$117,184,773

local business contract value



\$8,429,984

Māori business contract value

This funding represented the most significant contribution from central government in over 30 years and fast-tracked projects to improve long-term community flood resilience – it was considered the first step in an establishing an effective ongoing co-investment partnership for flood resilience between central and local government.

The first round of government co-investment proved what was possible – but it was a one-off response to a long-term challenge.

In 2018, the River Managers' SIG commissioned a current state assessment of Aotearoa New Zealand's flood resilience system, which at the time comprised 364 schemes. A central finding of the report produced by Tonkin + Taylor was that most river management and flood resilience schemes were constructed up to half a century ago; yet the value of the assets they protect – both directly and indirectly – has steadily increased. Adjacent urban development has also intensified. In most cases the value of these protected assets is disproportionately higher than the value of schemes themselves; and as a result, schemes may be under-designed for what they protect and enable, creating risks of asset failure.

In response, Te Uru Kahika, brought together regional flood risk data into a single national co-investment proposal for Ministers. The message was direct: local government could not carry the burden alone. The report sought a further \$150 million per annum from central government to help build the level of resilience increasingly required to protect communities, infrastructure, and regional economies from escalating flood risk. What strengthened the case was not only the data, but the reality behind it. Alongside investment modelling, the report documented the devastating impacts flood events had already inflicted on communities across the country over the preceding five years.

At the same time, central government was beginning to acknowledge that the policy settings underpinning flood resilience were no longer fit for purpose. A 2020 Cabinet paper recognised that funding arrangements established more than 30 years earlier could not sustainably respond to the increasing scale, frequency, and complexity of climate-related flood events; thus, signalling an important shift that resilience was becoming recognised not simply as a local issue, but as a matter of national interest requiring long-term partnership and co-investment.

That shift quickly translated into action. In 2021, the Government committed \$217 million through the 'shovel ready' programme to support 55 flood resilience projects across Aotearoa New Zealand that would accelerate ready to go existing or planned flood resilience works that could not go ahead because of the lack of funding.

It was valued and valuable to those regional communities that received funding. The pervading problem was that this funding was a 'one-off,' and available only to those projects that were ready to go. The funded projects did not necessarily all align with the areas of greatest flood risk or most urgent community vulnerability. While it delivered tangible benefits, it also exposed the limitations of short-term funding cycles in addressing long-term climate resilience needs.

Hence the purpose of the development of Before the Deluge business case in 2021.

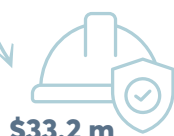
TRANCHE ONE: BEFORE THE DELUGE

'Before the Deluge' proposed co-investment of 92 projects – new and existing – of the most critical projects identified by 16 regional councils, of which 42 were approved.

Tranche One approved funding



Tranche One progress
as of March 2026



of the total amount spent so far went back to local contractors and suppliers

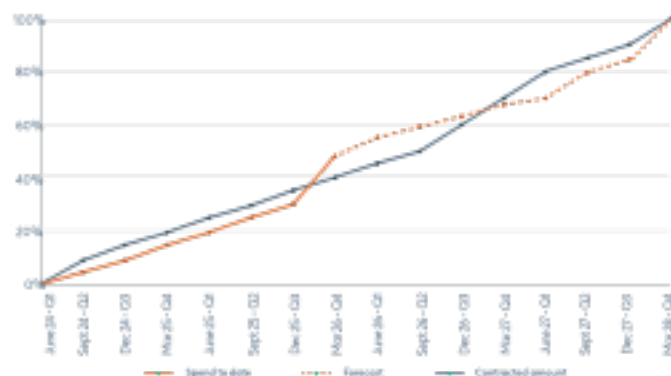


Tranche One prioritised shovel-ready and more urgent, critical flood resilience works over three years. Most are underway, with some already completed.

The co-investment from COVID-19 programme relief funded ready-to-go projects, but urgent, critical projects that had not yet been consented and approved did not make the initial list. The backlog of flood resilience works was still long, and the intensification of climate change-induced weather events is still an issue, so a further programme of work was put forward by Te Uru Kahika.

In 2022 the Before the Deluge business case was developed, which made the case for the continuation of the funding made available via Kānoa, to allow the momentum developed over the last few years to be maintained – for the sake of communities, businesses, and avoided fiscal costs. The case for co-investment was accepted by the Government in the 2022 Budget, as part the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF). Out of the proposed 92 critical projects, 42 were approved nationwide – with most well underway, on track and on budget, and some already completed or near completion as of March 2026.

Tranche One actual and forecast spend to date vs planned spend



The Tranche One funding was highly effective, not only because it reduced the backlog of critical upgrades of ageing and no longer fit-for-purpose infrastructure, but also because it delivered short- and long-term benefits for communities, councils, the insurance sector and the Crown. Crown investment flowed into the regional economies by providing sustained employment to local contractors and suppliers, giving businesses confidence in continued trading, protecting private and public assets, and strengthening infrastructure resilience to withstand future flood events.

The outcomes of Tranche One are closely aligned with the Government's 2024 strategic goals – deliver modern, reliable infrastructure critical in driving economic growth – and the Crown investment did just that. However, the underlying issue remained: funding was episodic, the infrastructure backlog continued growing, and sustained investment certainty had not yet been achieved.

TARADALE STOPBANKS: JUST IN TIME FOR CYCLONE GABRIELLE

The Taradale stopbank beside the Tūtaekurī River in Hawke's Bay was upgraded to increase its level of service from a 1% AEP (against 100-year flood) to 0.2% AEP (against 500-year flood) as part of the Tranche 1 co-investment programme. The work raised 2.5 km of the stopbank by 1 metre in height and increased its slope from 1:2 to 1:4 for greater resilience.

The work cost \$4 million and was completed in November 2022, just in time to protect the area from the flooding caused by Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023.

There are nearly 10,000 properties with a capital value of \$7.6 billion in the floodplain protected by this stopbank. In other parts of Hawke's Bay, there were 30 breaches or over-toppings of stopbanks across 5 km of the stopbank network during Cyclone Gabrielle, including some on the Tūtaekurī River.

However, the properties behind the Taradale Stopbank escaped significant damage by the timely completion of this upgrade, aided by government co-funding, and contributed to Napier having only 132 damaged properties 'stickered' for damage during the cyclone, compared to 920 in Hastings and 530 in Wairoa.



10,000

Properties protected by the Taradale stopbanks



32+ jobs

Created across the region whilst providing local training opportunities



5x-8x ROI

Investment in prevention avoids 5-8x greater cleanup and recovery costs



\$4 million

Investment in upgrades for the stop banks



Taradale stop bank under construction (n.d.)
Photo credit: Hawke's Bay Regional Council

The stopbank upgrades more than paid their way by the averted costs from Cyclone Gabrielle alone.



400 houses avoided damage as a result of the upgrades prior to Cyclone Gabrielle



\$14.6 million in insurance claims for houses and contents were avoided



\$24 million in indirect impacts were avoided from this single event



Payback period for the upgrades was less than a year, with lifetime benefits expected over the next 100 years

In May 2023, Hawke's Bay Regional Council (2023) estimated the cost of the damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle to amount to \$4 billion, primarily due to losses in the primary sectors (mainly agriculture, horticulture and viticulture), damage to local government infrastructure, central government response and relief costs, and cancelled events. Adding private insurance claims of just over \$979 million brings the total identified damage to \$5 billion.

Had the Taradale stopbanks not been upgraded as part of the Tranche 1 co-investment, it's likely the damage bill from Cyclone Gabrielle would have risen significantly depending on flooding extent.

32 projects

underway nationwide, saving assets
with a total capital value of

\$54.544 billion



National project

Flood resilience systems gap and warning infrastructure upgrades (led by ECan)

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$7,458m	\$12,433m	

Northland Regional Council

Lower Whangāpoto Spitway stopbank setback

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$150m	\$2,500m	\$647m

Waikato Regional Council

Lower Pūkai River stopbank upgrades
Coromandel Peninsula flood resilience infrastructure upgrades
Waikato, Waipa and West Coast stream and sediment reduction

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$4,200m	\$7,000m	\$149m
\$1,680m	\$2,800m	\$17,260b
\$2,500m	\$4,700m	\$719m

Horizons Regional Council

Tā Pūkai/Lower Whangāpoto River flood resilience strengthening

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$737m	\$18,125m	\$1.5b

Buller District Council

Buller River stopbank infrastructure project

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$2,400m	\$4,000m	\$1.6b

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Whakatāne River scheme flood resilience improvements
Opotiki township stopbank flood resilience improvements
Ohineangaia Stream Erosion protection works
Pongakāhe/Tarawera Rivers scheme flood resilience improvements

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$2,640m	\$4,000m	\$700m
\$1,380m	\$2,300m	\$17b
\$1,980m	\$3,300m	\$900m
\$1,100m	\$5,300m	\$380m

Nelson City Council

Jensens Creek flood resilience improvements

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$1,800m	\$2,000m	\$100m

Tasman District Council

Motuwa River flood protection upgrade

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$9,600m	\$15,800m	\$2,230b

Marlborough District Council

Lower Wairau stopbank upgrades

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$10,200m	\$17,000m	\$1.6b

Environment Canterbury

Regional Infrastructure Upgrades and Adaptation Programme Stage 2
Ashburton River/Hokitike flood resilience infrastructure upgrades
Ashley River/Rakahimū flood resilience infrastructure upgrades
Oxley River flood resilience infrastructure upgrades
Waimakareti River flood resilience infrastructure upgrades
Ophi River flood resilience infrastructure upgrades
Kaikōura flood resilience infrastructure upgrades
Pareora River flood resilience infrastructure upgrades

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$2,400m	\$4,000m	\$199m
\$2,100m	\$3,500m	\$319m
\$1,500m	\$2,500m	\$6.8b
\$1,050m	\$1,750m	\$543m
\$2,100m	\$2,500m	\$719m
\$0,750m	\$1,250m	\$647m
\$0,900m	\$1,500m	\$203m
\$0,800m	\$1,000m	\$274m

Otago Regional Council

Silver Stream Capacity Improvements
Kaitangata floodbank reconstruction
East Taieri/Lower Pongakāhe structure upgrades
Puerua outfall structure upgrades
Puerua flood protection strengthening
Riverbank Road flood risk mitigation

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$0,480m	\$0,800m	\$4b
\$0,400m	\$0,700m	\$17b
\$1,020m	\$1,700m	\$4b
\$1,200m	\$2,000m	\$17b
\$0,500m	\$1,000m	\$17b
\$0,960m	\$1,600m	\$17b

Environment Southland

Invercargill and Oreti flood resilience stopbank upgrades
Mataura River flood protection improvements (Gore and Mataura)

Crown funding	Total project value	Value of assets protected
\$410m	\$6,890m	\$803m
\$10,800m	\$18,000m	\$567m



Crown funding



Total project value



Value of assets protected

TRANCHE 2: KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING

The devastation of Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle reinforced the urgent need for sustained investment in national flood resilience.

Tranche two projects, as outlined in Before the Deluge v2, prioritised projects

Ironically, the 'Before the Deluge' business case landed with Government only weeks before the devastation of Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle and attention was diverted to recovering from these events. As we saw from that flooding, and from other earlier events in Westport, Nelson, Ashburton and beyond, these severe weather events cause loss of life and livelihoods. They also create tremendous strain on Government resources and funds in response and recovery, and in repair of Crown assets.

Hence, the development of the refreshed co-investment business case 'Before the Deluge 2.0' to reflect a changed funding and delivery environment. It outlined the need for co-investment in flood resilience infrastructure to improve Aotearoa New Zealand-wide community resilience against the impending climate change-induced extreme weather events.

The case sought Government co-investment of \$197m in the upcoming Mini-Budget toward the construction of 80 ready-to-go flood resilience infrastructure projects, or the Tranche Two, throughout Aotearoa New Zealand over a three-year period.

It removed projects already funded through subsequent Government initiatives, including the North Island Weather Events 2023 recovery programme, updates costings to account for construction price escalation, and strengthens alignment between individual projects and councils' broader work programmes through the Protect, Accommodate, Retreat, Avoid (PARA) framework.



As part of tranche 2, the Otago Regional Council upgraded the flow management structures at the Robson Lagoon.

The Robson Lagoon is ranked 5th out of the 10 most significant wildlife habitats, and is home to a broad range of native flora and fauna, including many rare and threatened culturally-significant species. The tranche 2 funding enabled the replacement of ageing infrastructure with new solar-powered flow control gates, allowing better management of tributary flows and flood control within the 566 hectare lagoon complex.



TRANCHE THREE: THE NEXT STEPS

Te Uru Kahika is proposing the next tranche of co-investment, supported by a new prioritisation methodology.



215,401

total people affected by the flood schemes



161,730

building assets with a replacement value of

\$67.89 billion



3064 km

roads



221 km

railway lines



124 km

transmission lines



2116 km

wastewater pipes



3449 km

water supply pipes



1447 km

stormwater pipes

Having addressed many long-delayed priorities, the Tranche Three focuses on achieving the greatest return from every dollar invested.

The events of early 2026 show that severe weather will continue to challenge the country into the future. And in order to keep protecting property and assets and our economy, we need to keep investing in flood risk resilience.

Around the world, governments and major institutions are moving towards impact-based, consequence-driven modelling when it comes to climate-risk and flood-risk assessments. This is exactly what RiskScape does – the evidence-based tool Te Uru Kahika is using to prioritise targeted investment decisions for the third tranche of projects. RiskScape is a nationally developed, impact-based risk modelling tool developed by Earth Sciences NZ to assess risk to people, buildings, and infrastructure from natural hazards such as flooding. Further analysis is also underway by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) to link the exposure data to national and regional economic impacts, which will allow us to refine the BCRs and evaluate the impacts on different sectors.

The initial work has put forward 30 critical regional projects (table on the right) on behalf of Regional and Unitary Councils, covering the length of Aotearoa New Zealand. This is the third tranche of investment, totalling \$370.6 million, which will take action on some of the country's most pressing flood risk challenges. Once again, Te Uru Kahika is proposing the 60/40 investment approach used in prior tranches.

The proposed tranche of 30 projects begins the process of proactive investment, rather than simply addressing pressing infrastructure deficits. These are longer-run and in some cases significantly larger projects which will protect communities for many decades to come, and which will have a more significant economic impact.

The diagrams on the left and below shows the extent and value of the assets and infrastructure being protected by the 30 priority projects – 960 square km of urban and productive land, thousands of kilometres of roads and pipelines, more than 200,000 people, and \$67 billion of buildings.

Assets protected by flood schemes across the country

	Area (km²)	Capital value (\$b)	Improvement value (\$b)	Land value (\$b)
Built-up area or infrastructure	87.62	70.19	33.90	40.28
Water	4.84	2.68	1.15	1.52
Productive land	867.97	32.89	14.76	18.11
Total	960.44	109.73	49.82	59.92

Council	Project	Total cost (\$m)	Crown (\$m)	Council (\$m)
Northland Regional Council	Donald Road Capacity Improvements	\$ 1.70	\$ 1.02	\$ 0.68
Waikato Regional Council	Lower Piako Stopbanks - Phase 2	\$ 25.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 10.00
	Smartification of Pump Stations Waihou & Piako	\$ 3.90	\$ 2.34	\$ 1.56
	Wharekawa Coast Flood Resilience	\$ 1.50	\$ 0.90	\$ 0.60
Bay of Plenty Regional Council	Waioweka - Otara Rivers Scheme, Wharf floodwall and stopbank upgrades	\$ 2.20	\$ 1.32	\$ 0.88
	Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Stopbank strengthening	\$ 6.20	\$ 3.72	\$ 2.48
	Waioweka- Otara Rivers Scheme, Duke Street Pump Station	\$ 3.50	\$ 2.10	\$ 1.40
Gisborne District Council	Te Karaka Stopbank Upgrades	\$ 35.00	\$ 19.20	\$ 15.80
Taranaki Regional Council	Waiwhakaiho FPS: Rimu Street to Devon Road protection improvements	\$ 3.00	\$ 1.80	\$ 1.20
Horizons Regional Council	Reid Line Spillway	\$ 15.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 6.00
	Rangiorua Floodgates	\$ 5.20	\$ 3.12	\$ 2.08
Hawke's Bay Regional Council	Waitangi / Ngaruroro Confluence - Channel Capacity Improvements	\$ 10.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 4.00
	Wairoa River Mouth	\$ 20.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 8.00
Greater Wellington Regional Council	Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi stage 1	\$ 50.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 20.00
	Moonshine stopbank upgrade	\$ 6.50	\$ 3.90	\$ 2.60
	Waipoua Urban Reach stopbank upgrade	\$ 30.00	\$ 18.00	\$ 12.00
Nelson City Council	Saltwater Creek Pump Station	\$ 4.80	\$ 2.88	\$ 1.92
Tasman District Council	Tapawera Township Stopbank Assumption and Refurbishment	\$ 3.00	\$ 1.80	\$ 1.20
	Motueka Stopbank Upgrades	\$ 20.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 8.00
Marlborough District Council	Taylor Dam Revitalisation	\$ 12.00	\$ 7.20	\$ 4.80
Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury)	Ashley Rakahuri Secondary Stopbank	\$ 15.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 6.00
	Structure upgrades/adaptation programme #3	\$ 36.53	\$ 21.92	\$ 14.61
West Coast Regional Council	Westport Flood Resilience Programme	\$ 25.05	\$ 15.03	\$ 10.02
	Greymouth Small Catchments Programme	\$ 3.46	\$ 2.08	\$ 1.38
	Hokitika Stopbank Construction Stage 2 (Kaniere)	\$ 8.72	\$ 5.22	\$ 3.48
Otago Regional Council	Riverside Road Spillway Resilience Improvements	\$ 5.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.00
	Lake Ascog Pump Station - Pump Renewals	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.60	\$ 0.40
Environment Southland	Invercargill City Flood Resilience Stage 1	\$ 5.77	\$ 3.46	\$ 2.31
	Tuatapere Domain Bank	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.15	\$ 0.10
	Mataura Flood Resilience Stage 2	\$ 19.55	\$ 11.73	\$ 7.82
Total		\$ 370.62	\$ 222.37	\$ 148.25

PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS



My name is Greg Ryan, and I'm the Director of Integrated Catchment Management at Waikato Regional Council.

One of our areas of responsibility is the Hauraki Plains, which is a good example of how community expectations and levels of service and how we adapt to the future are all intersecting.

Both urban and rural people in the Hauraki are very reliant on our schemes, even day-to-day, because they are effectively tidal schemes that enable the productive use of land. And across the catchment there are some pretty big challenges with rising sea level, increased rainfall intensity, some areas of settling land, and there's some tectonic movement in that area as well. It's all putting increased pressure on the level of service and what it looks like in the decades ahead.

So we're having ongoing conversations with the community about the existing schemes and the level of service that's agreed to, making sure they operate well day to day and during events, and making sure we can operate and fund the schemes effectively.

As part of that discussion we're putting a lot of effort into making sure that people understand the limitations of our infrastructure. We have a communications campaign that's going at the moment, called Come High Water. It's on our website and Facebook and all the usual places, and it's about the fact we can't stop all the floods. We ran a similar campaign about 10 years ago which was really well received, and the Officer of the Auditor General recommended last year that we continue the community conversation around levels of service and what to expect, so we're doing that now.

But even when everyone understands the challenges, we still need to figure out the right solutions. The productive use of land is high on the agenda for our rural community, and they have businesses to run, and so they're very focused about how they sustain their business models in the future.

And what's becoming clear is that some areas of land might have to be retired or used for other purposes, because our traditional engineering approach just isn't going to be enough. So that means we and landowners have to focus on and prioritize land where we can maintain productive use.

in the past, we'd build a pump station to a 10 year event or build a stop bank to a 100 year event, and that would be fine and everyone can run their business and plan their lives. I think there is real acknowledgement now that firstly, we've got to think beyond our designs and prepare the community for what might happen. And secondly, we need to acknowledge that there are shifting goal posts these days. So if we designed for a hundred year event 20 years ago, in 30 years' time, that's going to be a very different goal post and a very different risk to the community.

I think our community – both urban and rural – pretty much gets it. Everyone can see the big events are getting more frequent and more serious, and that climate change is a big driver. I think for everyone it's shifting the time horizon, to think ahead about what the future will look like, and what we do about that together.

That means we need to think about where we're prioritising growth in our community and how we're using the land so we don't create issues that we can't solve in 50 years time. Let's do things well now so we don't create problems for our children and grandchildren.

Greg Ryan | Director of Integrated Catchments
Waikato Regional Council

Photo credit: Tim D

RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR FLOOD RESILIENCE

Research by NZIER demonstrates that flood resilience is an excellent fiscal investment.

Return on investment for flood resilience is defined as the costs that can be avoided through the implementation of resilience measures, including the construction of infrastructure; it is an avoided cost, rather than a direct facilitator of additional economic activity. From a national perspective, flood resilience can be viewed as a form of insurance – the capital and operational investments in the programme are cheaper than the costs of response and recovery, particularly when the long-term and indirect effects of major flood events are taken into account.

And as the table from the Ministry for the Environment shows, there are billions of dollars of property exposed to flood events:

5 year increment	Estimated number (count)			Estimated property value (\$ millions)		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
2026 - 2030	300	700	1,700	200	600	1,500
2031 - 2035	300	700	1,900	300	600	1,600
2036 - 2040	300	800	2,000	300	700	1,700
2041 - 2045	300	800	2,100	300	700	1,900
2046 - 2050	300	800	2,200	300	700	2,000
2052 - 2055	300	800	2,300	300	700	2,100
2056 - 2060	300	800	2,300	200	700	2,100
TOTAL	2,200	5,300	14,500	\$1,900	\$4,800	\$12,900

Estimated number of residential properties and property value (in millions) in coastal inundation and inland flood zones expected to experience at least one damaging event by 2060, distributed across 5-year increments under three damage threshold scenarios (low, medium, high)

– Climate Sigma report for Ministry for the Environment, January 2025

In 2021 Te Uru Kahika asked the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) to assess the direct costs and benefits of flood resilience investment, and this work showed that every \$1 invested produced \$4-\$5 in avoided costs from damage, response and recovery. Despite the narrow focus of the analysis – only the direct impacts were assessed – it shows that the return on investment is significantly higher than for most infrastructure projects in the country.

In 2025 Te Uru Kahika asked NZIER to extend the analysis by looking beyond the direct impacts, and the table on the following page shows the scope of the costs that can be avoided by careful investment.

THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS OF FLOODING

Cost of flooding	Direct	Indirect	Intangible
Human costs			
Deaths			
Injuries			
Persons and days in evacuation			
Rescue operation costs			
Hospital & treatment costs			
Lost productivity from injury			
Mental anxiety/insecurity			
Heritage degradation			
Environmental health			
Property damage & losses			
Buildings			
Homes			
Infrastructure			
Vehicles			
Stock			
Disruption costs			
Temporary infrastructure closure			
Business lost revenue			
Business added costs			
Other added costs			
On-going production loss			
Recovery/treatment cost			
During event costs			
Post-event costs			
Reputational costs			

"Floods cause damage to inundated properties, but can also adversely affect activities that are not directly touched by flooding, but are curtailed by it because of supply chain disruption. That distinction is behind the common categorisation of flood impacts into Direct impacts (caused by contact with flood waters) and Indirect impacts (caused by disruption of activities in locations not directly flooded).

A third impact category is so-called "intangible" impacts on things of value to people that are not generally traded or readily valued through market processes. These include fatal and non-fatal injuries to people, impairment of natural and cultural heritage sites, and reputational hits on flooded areas. Intangibles are most likely from direct contact with floodwaters, but they can also arise indirectly, such as deferring of critical medical treatment due to flood disrupted transport systems."

– NZIER



THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

Despite the advances in successive tranches of investment, challenges remain.

Risks and consequences of the stop-start funding model



Higher costs

Without a predictable pipeline, procurement becomes less efficient and repeated unnecessarily, inflation compounds delays, and projects cost more to deliver; mobilisation and demobilisation costs occur more. Economies of scale lost because projects cannot be bundled together.



Loss of capability

Specialist capability, experienced project teams, and institutional knowledge are difficult to retain between funding rounds. New teams have to be established when funding resumes.



Project delays

Projects are paused while waiting for funding decisions. Planning, consenting and design work may need to be revisited if significant time has passed; construction windows can be missed, particularly where seasonal constraints apply.



Reactive investment

Funding tends to follow disasters instead of preventing them. Priority may be given to "shovel-ready" projects rather than those with highest long-term value. Councils focus on securing next funding rather than planning long-term.



Reduced confidence

Businesses delay investment decisions and communities remain uncertain about whether protection will actually be delivered.

Tranche two projects, as outlined in Before the Deluge v2, prioritised projects

The effect of the co-investment tranches has been hugely positive for communities and businesses across the country. However, the successes need to be set against the backdrop of some decades of under-investment in flood risk resilience, as investment failed to keep pace with the increasing risk profile from a changing climate and increased economic activity.

The co-investment pipeline to date has focused on projects that can start quickly and which will complete in relatively short timeframes. The reason projects have met these criteria is because they represent an overhang of critical works – they are the projects that councils wished to prioritise because of their importance, but which could not be funded from local or regional resources.

The sector is now at the point where longer-term perspectives are needed. There are still projects – particularly within tranche 3 – that are increasingly urgent as the severity of major weather events increases. With the immediate backlog largely addressed, attention can now turn to the medium-term projects that can take a more considered and cost-effective approach to design and delivery.

But momentum is important. Providing certainty to the construction sector with a decade-long pipeline of confirmed projects will allow capacity and capability to be developed, which will help contain costs and increase quality. Crucially, it will also provide certainty to communities and businesses, and give people and companies confidence to invest.

From the perspective of the sector, continued commitment also means the gains made over the last five years – by addressing the most urgent areas of under-investment – won't start to erode. If we return to the status quo funding model, the cycle of delayed and deferred projects will start again, because the issues of affordability, fairness of funding approaches, and ability to pay haven't materially changed; we risk a return to the high levels of vulnerability we are only just escaping now.

The following sections of this business case set out how we continue the journey and deliver the outcomes our communities expect and our economy requires.

A photograph of a wet road with orange traffic cones. The road is wet and reflective, with several orange and white striped traffic cones arranged in a line. In the background, there are cars, including a silver sedan and a green truck. A stop sign is visible on the left. The overall scene suggests a construction or maintenance site on a rainy day.

3

The scale of investment



PERSPECTIVES: THE BRAIDED RIVERS



My name's Manon Prin, and I'm originally from France where I studied environmental protection followed by a master's degree in agronomy, before making my way to Aotearoa New Zealand. Now I work in the Braided River Revival team at Environment Canterbury. What we do is mostly focused on reintegrating wild systems into the modified braided river systems.

As part of the rivers team in the regional council, we're working to help keep our flood resilience assets functional by combining traditional measures with ideas from the restoration world and ecological concepts. We assist with berm management and fairway management to control weeds, and to build biodiversity across the river corridors, constructing habitat and biodiversity patches along the river.

We don't do this alone. We work with a lot of different groups – we work with community groups, sometimes with DOC, we engage with schools and with rating district groups. We talk to national and international experts, universities, and ecologists. We had the opportunity to meet with experts in community-led projects from the US who came and talk to us about their challenges and wins, and we've exchanged on what we've learned too. All of this informs our work and our practices.

By doing this, we restore some of the natural functions of a braided river. Sometimes it's small interventions and sometimes it's larger projects, just depending on where we are within the catchment, depending on what's allowed, depending on the resources or the existing constraints. It can be very site specific.

The biggest challenge in our braided river landscape is the loss of resilience, the loss of wild systems that would naturally act as buffers. This means that flood resilience assets need to be managed differently in places and better supported so the rivers and the ecosystems can revitalise themselves. That's the most pressing issue, especially with climate change and the costs associated with it.

Our history of managing rivers is linked to early urbanisation as we needed to protect cities built near river corridors. In many cases these were too close, compared to what we might consider safe these days. This is why we have pinched and constrained reaches now and why we have limited options for holding infrastructure in place. In tight reaches good, smart engineering is needed.

Over the longer term, we need to establish sections and spaces where the river has room to do things by itself to provide flood resilience and regeneration of habitat. These rivers are wild dynamic systems that are a lot wider and broader than the fairway plus berm elements that we normally think about, and the more we try to constrain the river the harder it becomes to manage the flood risks and try and keep them environment healthy.

We know what we are doing now, and we know how to get the best outcomes in our berms. Our berm transition projects are establishing so quickly and achieving many outcomes, including flood resilience support and wild native growth. This work is widely appreciated as it becomes visible that our recipe is working. We need to maintain momentum.

Manon Prin | Braided Rivers Officer – Natural Infrastructure
Environment Canterbury

Photo credit: Tim D

DEFINING THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Investment in flood resilience infrastructure is a complex interplay between community requirements, engineering options and approaches, funding availability, and environmental stewardship.

Projects and schemes are individually developed and evolved over time as the needs of the community, changes in land use, and our evolving climate develop. And by nature, investments are very long-term; schemes commenced more than 100 years ago are still helping protect communities across the country.

For this reason, the role of Regional and Unitary Councils is key – because of the connection to the communities, the rivers, and the land in each of the catchments, as well as the long history of understanding the context and intentions for each scheme.

The River Managers within each Council are responsible for developing the asset management plans for existing infrastructure, and for developing the forward investment plans to maintain and sustain the levels of service within the schemes. This section of the document sets out how this is achieved, and the scale of the investment in the decades ahead.

DEFINING THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT REQUIREMENTS

The planned national approach to flood risk resilience infrastructure is an integrated programme of investment.

The scale of the challenge demands a coordinated and enduring investment response.

Building national flood risk resilience requires moving beyond siloed responses toward an integrated programme that aligns priorities, shares data and tools, and scales investment according to risk and need. What we are asking the Government stands: a long-term 60%-40% Crown-Council co-investment model for flood resilience.

The forward investment programme provides a consolidated national view of flood resilience investment requirements across Regional and Unitary Councils. It draws together investments identified through Long Term Plans (LTP), infrastructure strategies, asset management plans, and river management programmes, highlighting the scale and continuity of investment required to maintain and strengthen resilience across Aotearoa New Zealand.

The programme is not a fixed portfolio of projects, but an investment pathway based on the best information at the time of preparation, and should be expected to evolve.

Current investment requirements identified by Councils fall into three broad categories:



Individual projects will continue to evolve through established Council processes, including community consultation, technical assessment, and application of the Protect, Accommodate, Retreat and Avoid (PARA) framework.

This reflects a continuing need to renew ageing flood resilience assets, maintain agreed Levels of Service, respond to escalating climate risks, and support long-term community resilience. While specific projects may change over time, the underlying investment requirement remains constant.

THE WAY FORWARD – CAPITAL INVESTMENT PIPELINE

Considerable work has been done by the sector to align the multi-decadal investment pipeline within the context of Infrastructure Commission Te Waihangā's Infrastructure Strategy and the evolving National Infrastructure Plan.

The investment pipeline maps required projects – immediate investments, asset maintenance and renewal, and future resilience investments – identified by the sector into three Stages, aligned with Te Waihangā programme business cases.

We are proposing a 60/40 co-investment between the Crown and councils.

Near-term projects
0-3 years

\$420m
per annum

These figures are typically developed from detailed business cases or committed programmes through Council LTP processes.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, this aligns with NZTA's P95-ready or P90 mature estimates, which incorporate design-level detail, recent market rates, and risk-adjusted costings. As a result, there is a relatively higher confidence associated with these figures.

Mid-term projects
4-10 years

\$370m
per annum

These are often based on concept-level plans or indicative project pipelines.

International best practice (including NZTA's cost estimation guidance and UK Green Book principles) suggests these are generally at a P50 confidence level – i.e., expected to be exceeded 50% of the time.

Long-projects
11-30 years

\$410m
per annum

These are broad projections based on asset reinvestment methodology, with consideration of Infrastructure Strategy. These numbers are typically inflated for risk, escalation, and future climate-driven needs, incorporating less granular data but accounting for compounding uncertainty.

In this sense, they can be viewed as policy-level high-side forecasts rather than project-ready budgets.

THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROCESS

Investment decisions are grounded in Council LTPs but remain adaptable under PARA framework to reflect the evolving risks, community priorities, and long-term outcomes.

The process diagram below shows how flood resilience investments are developed within the statutory frameworks defined in the Local Government Act 2002, which mandates Regional and Unitary Councils to consult with their communities every three years, as part of their LTPs.

As required by the legislation, there are multiple stages of investment development, options analysis, and community consultation before the project is confirmed and commenced.

Before the Deluge 3 | Scale of Investment

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LONG TERM ASSET STEWARDSHIP

Councils have increasingly sophisticated long term asset management strategies for flood resilience.



Some flood resilience assets can date back around 100 years, as we began protecting our towns and farms from the threat of riverine floods. The stopbanks in the lower reaches of the Waimakariri River in Canterbury were first constructed from onsite materials in the 1920s, for instance.

Understanding the extent, condition and likely lifecycle of the many thousands of assets in each council is the starting point for developing the long-term investment pipeline. Considerable work has been done by individual regional and unitary councils on their long-term asset management plans, and there has been extensive coordination via the River Managers Special Interest Group (SIG) to establish common standards and approaches for asset management. The River Managers SIG has supported the sharing of knowledge and promoted greater consistency in asset management approaches. It is acknowledged that asset management practices vary and there is an opportunity to raise the level of maturity across the sector.

However, assessing condition and lifecycle is complex – particularly when it comes to stopbanks and similar structures. In many cases they have been built and rebuilt over many decades to different engineering standards, periodically repaired and replaced, whilst being managed by a variety of public sector organisations with varied record keeping practices. In addition, they are increasingly exposed to more severe weather events and flooding scenarios.

For near-term upgrade and replacement projects, assets are inspected and evaluated so the engineering options can be assessed and costed. This is the case with the projects in the 0-3 year time frame, as the diagram on the following page shows.

Projects in the 4-10 year time horizon make estimates for likely asset condition based on council records and other assessments, but further investigations are typically needed before engineering design can occur – which means costs are more uncertain.

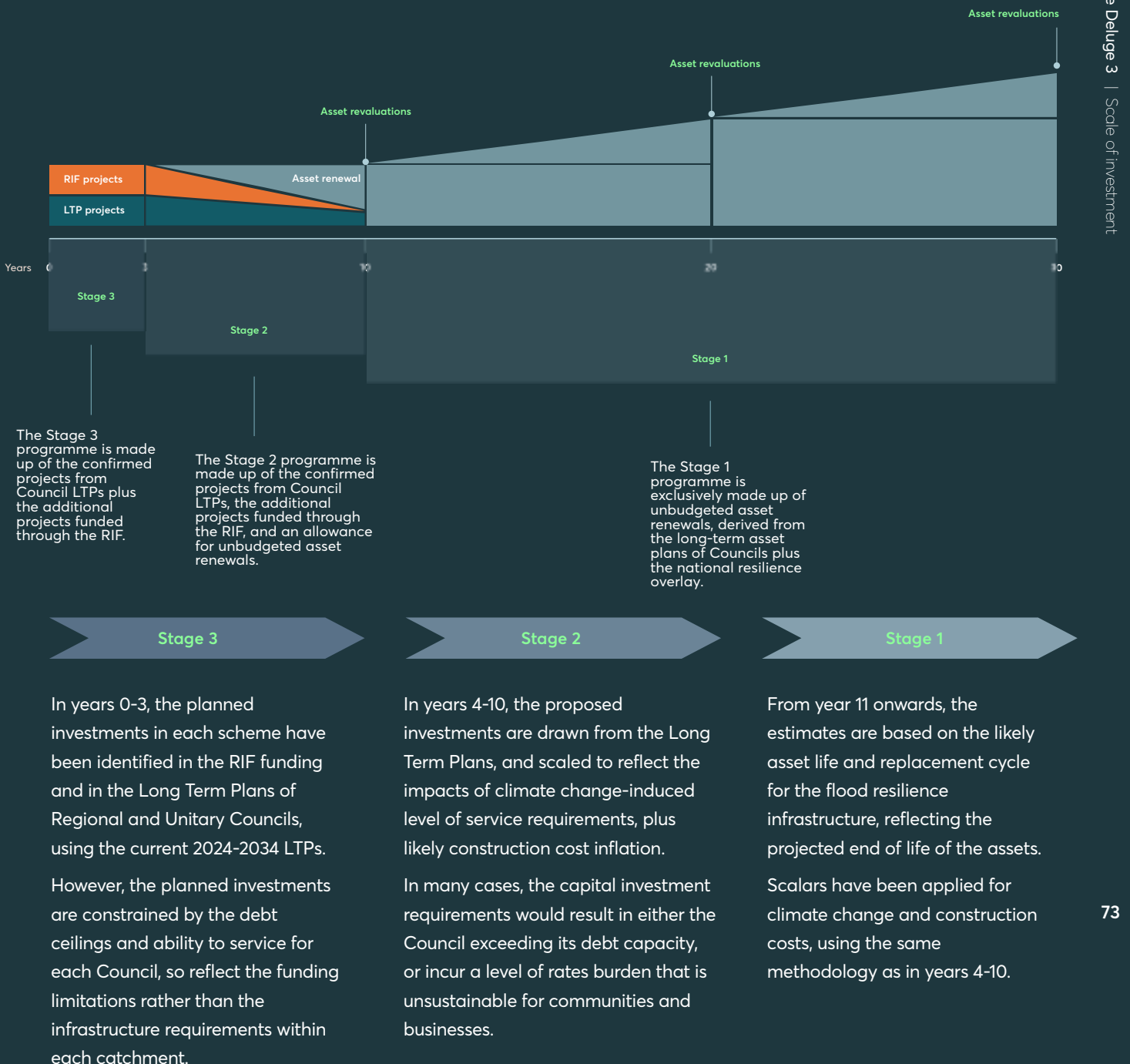
Over the 11-30 year range, asset lifecycles are estimated from the asset management records and are a financial calculation only – which means the future investment is based on ranged estimates of asset renewal or replacement, with little direct validation of the asset condition or assessment of the engineering options. These estimates carry the greatest uncertainty.

The diagram on the following page shows how the different estimation methodologies are combined to produce a forward investment pipeline.

THE LONG TERM ESTIMATION APPROACH

The diagram below shows how the capital estimates for the programme have been developed, which are applied consistently across all Councils from year 1 to

The asset renewal approach takes the current value of the assets held by Councils, and estimates that a 50% reinvestment cycle will be required to ensure they are able to meet the LOS requirements in the face of growing climate change challenges. For the purposes of the modelling, the assets are revalued every decade



It's worth noting that these projections are for existing assets, and don't take account of any entirely new flood resilience schemes required by communities such as in Westport and Wairoa.

CONTINUING THE CURRENT INVESTMENT SHARING

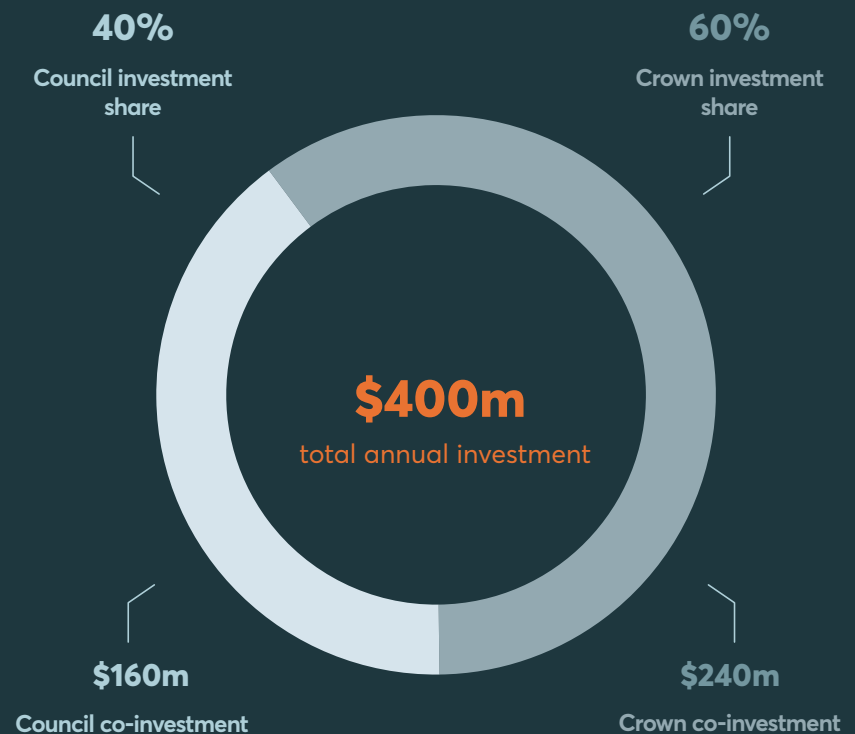
Starting with post-COVID recovery funding in 2021, the Crown and the sector have agreed multiple tranches of co-investment in flood resilience, totalling \$659m. This has enabled long-delayed projects to be accelerated, with resultant benefits to communities and businesses – including effective protection during Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle, and the severe weather events of early 2026.

A further \$370m of co-investment is being discussed as part of the next tranche of activity, which will enable longer-term projects to be progressed.

In all tranches, 60% of the investment has been provided by the Crown, with the remaining 40% coming from regional and unitary councils. The sector – via Te Uru Kahika – is proposing to formalise this co-investment methodology into a long-term commitment, in order to build a national pipeline of flood resilience projects.

As the graph on the following page shows, around \$400 million in annual investment is required to address the challenges of climate change pressure, the growing value of economic activity on land vulnerable to flooding, and a growing population. The Crown commitment being sought is \$240m per annum, significantly less than the repair and recovery costs being incurred by the government from flood events.

The co-investment approach is similar to that agreed with councils for local roads, via the New Zealand Transport Agency, where there is a proportional commitment that allows the Crown, councils, and the contracting sector to plan and deliver projects with certainty. The approach will be supported by a national prioritisation framework provided via Te Uru Kahika, which will deliver a high degree of investment transparency.

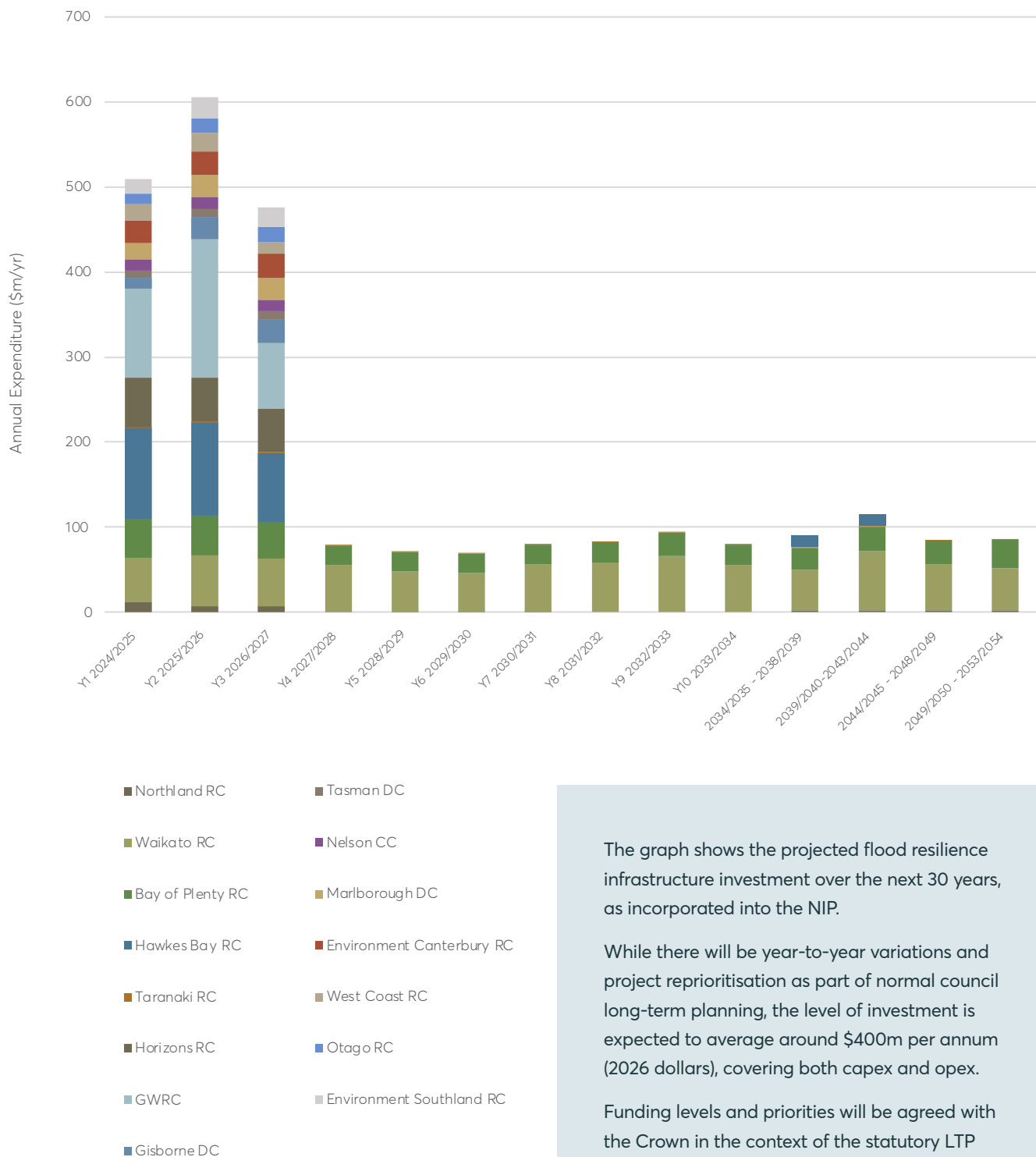


This value represents the long-term average annual investment, comprising both CAPEX and OPEX, split evenly (50/50) and expressed in constant 2026 dollars.



INVESTMENT FORECASTS FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS

Forecast annual investment including proposed Crown funding Capex plus opex



OPERATING COSTS ARE KEY TO FLOOD RESILIENCE

While there are billions of dollars of flood resilience assets, ongoing operational expenditure is required.



Operational costs tend to be largest and most critical expense in flood resilience, hence we are proposing to include opex as part of the co-investment partnership.

The big-ticket investments associated with flood resilience infrastructure tend to receive the greatest focus from communities; however, much of the successful performance of flood resilience schemes depends on ongoing and diligent operational activities, which must be funded annually.

Operating expenditures fall into different categories:



Ongoing maintenance

of flood resilience assets, such as replacement of components for pump stations, repairs to stop banks, the removal of debris from screens, etc.



River management

including the targeting of weed species in the catchments, the development and maintenance of nature-based catchment elements such as wetlands, the removal of excess vegetation, gravel, silt, and other debris from river beds to maintain clear waterways



Funding of depreciation costs

for capital assets, in accordance with Council asset management and financing policies.

In practically all cases, the operating costs associated with flood risk resilience are greater in most financial years than the capital costs of schemes, and this has largely been the case since their inception.

Operating costs must be fully borne by ratepayers in the year in which they are incurred. The nature of year-by-year operating costs also means that Councils cannot borrow to fund them, in comparison with capital costs, where borrowing can be used to equitably spread long-term costs across the generations.

This means that the level of rates is highly sensitive to operating costs, to a much greater extent than new capital costs – but the successful performance of flood resilience schemes in major weather events means maintenance and river management cannot be deferred into future years without significantly increased risks.

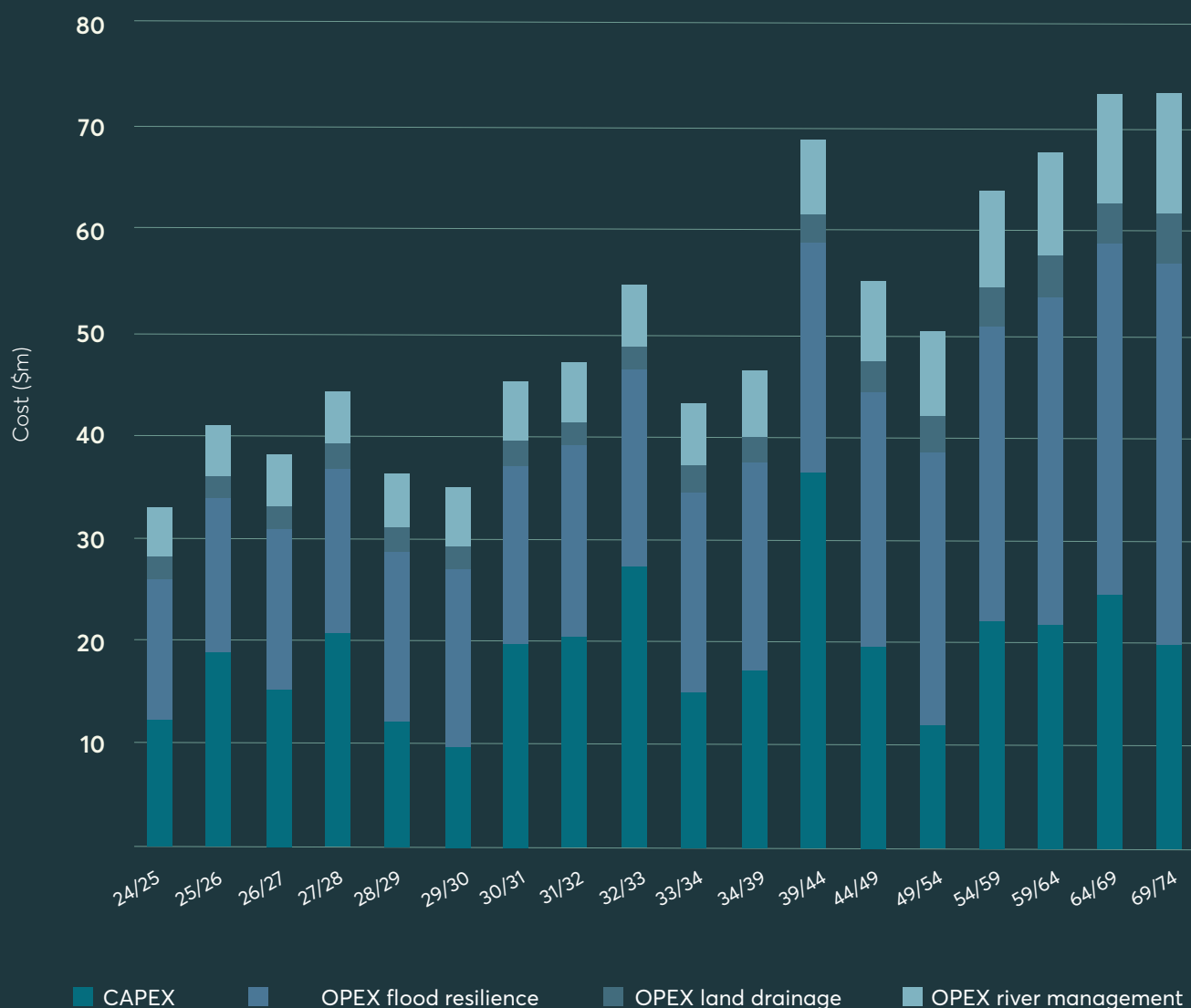
For these reasons, we are proposing that the operational costs of flood risk resilience are included in the co-investment partnership between Councils and the Crown.

Case study: Waikato Regional Council

Forecast spend profile 2024-2074

The 50 year forecast for capital and operational expenditure for Waikato Regional Council is shown in the diagram below, illustrating the ongoing and significant expenditure required to maintain assets, undertake river management and drainage management, and fund long-term depreciation.

In most years, the operating costs exceed the capital investments and will continue to do so over the coming decades.



Waikato Regional Council's Regional Asset Management Plan translates capex and opex projections into a 50-year expenditure profile, illustrating how operational, renewal and new capital needs shift over time.

The first 10 years are shown individually, with years 11–50 presented in five-year averages.

Mike Jensen | Area Engineer
Greater Wellington Regional Council



PERSPECTIVES: CARING FOR THE RIVER



My name's Mike Jensen and I'm an Area Engineer at the Greater Wellington Regional Council. I've been working on and around the Hutt River for the last 45 years, starting with the organisation that morphed into the regional council in my late teens.

Back then, the focus was on controlling the river, keeping it within the narrowest reach we could. So we built stop banks and planted willows and poplars, and tried to tighten it up. But a river is a natural system, and so now we talk about resilience and how we have the right infrastructure and assets in the correct place. Giving more room for the river.

That's what the Flood Operations team does every day. We look at how the river is moving and we figure out where hard interventions like rock groynes and rock walls need to go. We create soft river banks with plants and trees, and slow down the flow and, where needed, we cut out the major weeds like gorse and broom.

It's a dynamic environment but it's an essential part of keeping the river healthy, creating better habitats and building flood resilience. The big stuff – the diggers and the piles of armour rock – that's what gets people's attention when they're driving past, so they don't tend to see a few people working on the river bank. But when the big rains come and the river rises, it's the soft stuff that's our first line of defence.

It's easy to look at a contoured river bank with some grass on it and think it's just a bit of landscaping. But the location and the angle and the vegetation have all been carefully thought about, to manage the flow, to give the river space to spread in a flood so it doesn't do more damage downstream. It's not obvious but it's very effective.

We spend a lot of time working on the succession of trees along the Hutt River. Willows do a great job holding the banks together and slowing the flood flows, but trees get swept away or the river changes course or the trees die, and we need to have smaller ones coming through to keep up the protection. And these days we're doing as much as we can with native plantings, using the willows as a pioneer or nursery plant. We now plant twice as many natives as willows.

All that takes time and effort and money. The Flood Operations team is gradually growing, because we know how effective the natural solutions can be, and there's a lot more work to be done given how frequently flood events are occurring. In some cases we're having to go flat out to get plantings established, because we know the next flood could be just around the corner.

So we do the quiet job, if you like, working on the river banks. People come up and ask us what we're up to, and some days we spend more time chatting to them about floods and rivers and ecology than all the rest of the council put together. But the team love the work, out in the outdoors, getting things done. Come and say hi if you see us working.

4

Analysis and prioritisation

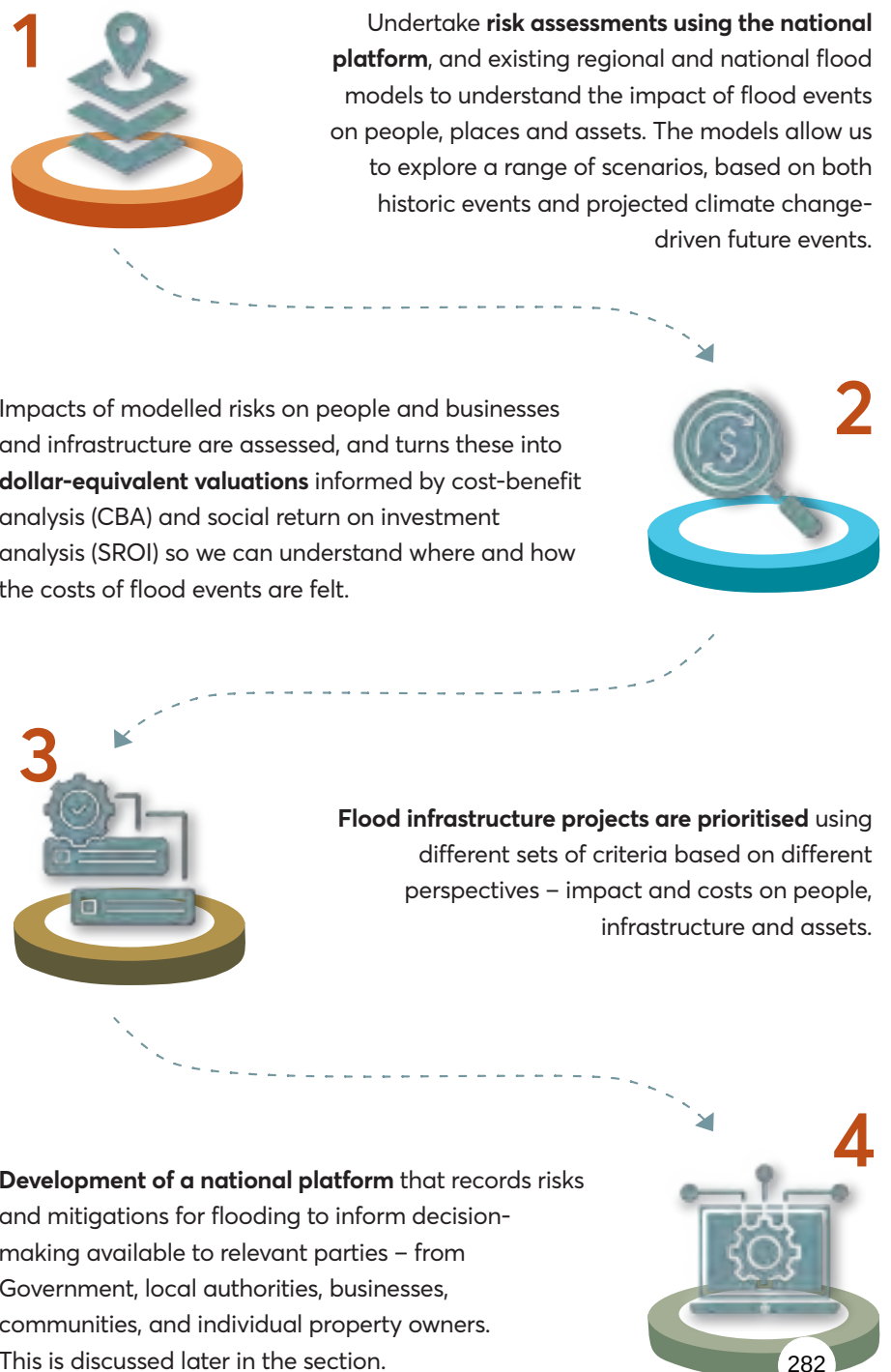


ABOUT THIS SECTION OF THE DOCUMENT

This section sets out the analysis methodology for prioritising flood risk resilience.



High-level overview of the methodology of analysis and prioritisation of projects



USING SOFTWARE TO ASSESS RISK

Te Uru Kahika is developing a national prioritisation platform to provide a national assessment of risk and impact.

The proposed national platform measures risk and quantifies it before disasters become losses.

Around the world, governments and major institutions are moving towards impact-based, consequence-driven modelling when it comes to climate-risk and flood-risk assessments. This is the evidence-based toolset Te Uru Kahika is developing to prioritise targeted investment decisions for this tranche of projects.

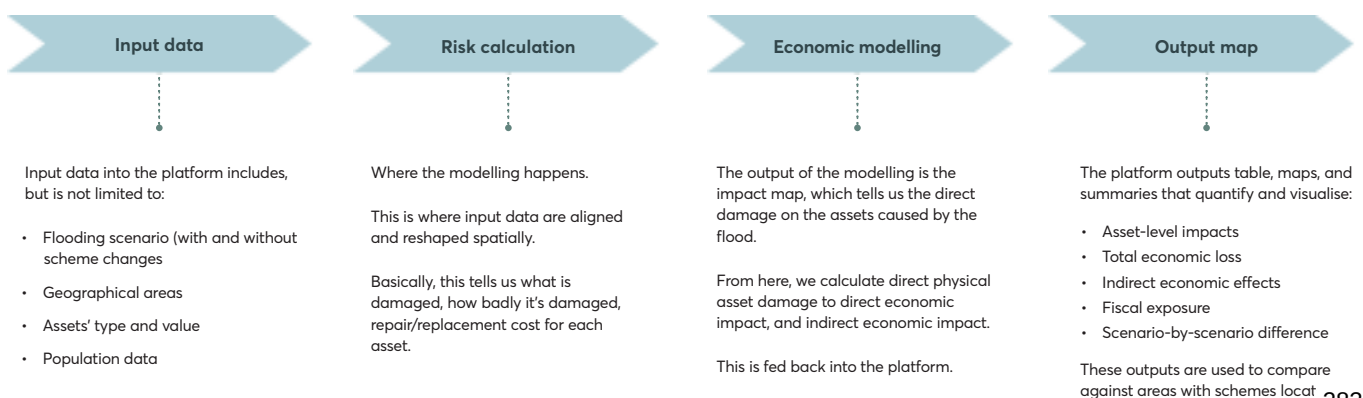
As described later in this section, the platform will provide a nationally consistent impact-based risk modelling tool to assess risk to people, buildings, and infrastructure from natural hazards such as flooding.

This approach has been piloted for tranche 3, and allows us to integrate flood hazard data with detailed information about buildings, businesses, farms, infrastructure, and community assets, so we can calculate the real economic, social, and environmental costs of flood events in a consistent and accurate way across the country.

What we're doing is innovative, but firmly grounded in evidence-based modern international best practice. This model moves beyond static flood maps to understanding who and what is affected, by how much, the economic and fiscal impacts, and the broader social costs. It enables us to quantify both the direct damage caused by floodwaters and the wider indirect impacts on the regional and national economy.

Using the national platform, we systematically identify the assets exposed to flooding, assess the damage they would sustain under defined scenarios, and translate those losses into economic and fiscal terms. This provides the evidence needed to compare options, prioritise projects, and demonstrate where mitigation

How the platform works



HOW IS RISK ASSESSED

We are using the latest national and international research and evidence to assess the risks of flooding.

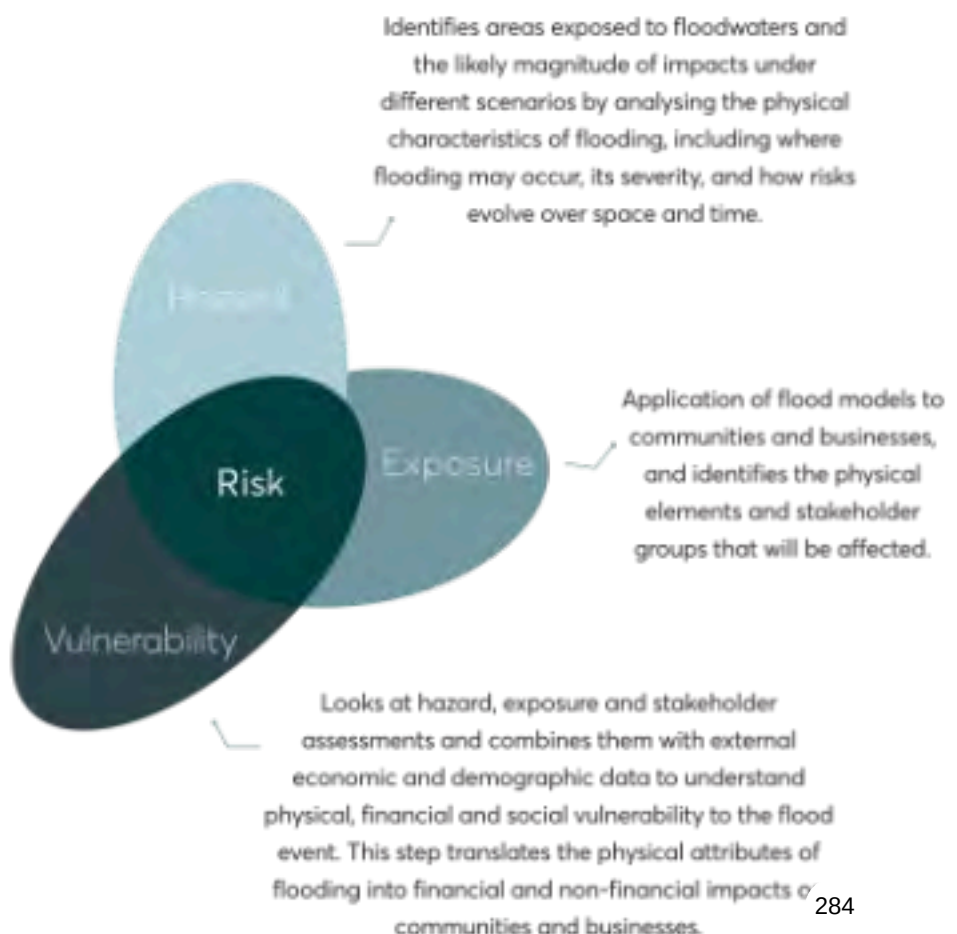
The first step is to understand how floodings affects communities.

Local and regional councils have made significant investment in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other systems that underpin the spatial understanding of the their territories and flood models that can assess the impact of future events. These systems and models provide the foundation for understanding the hazard, exposure, and vulnerability of people and assets to flooding.

Risk assessment integrates these elements to translate modelling outputs into an understanding of real-world consequences – identifying where impacts are likely to occur, who may be affected, and the potential scale of economic and social losses under different scenarios.

Flood risk is assessed by considering the interaction between three components, commonly expressed as:

Flood risk = Hazard x Exposure x Vulnerability



Inputs

Topography and terrain data
Hydrological data
Hydraulic modeling inputs
Flood scenarios
Land use / surface inputs
Meteorological inputs

Assets / Built environment
Infrastructure datasets
Land use and natural systems
Stakeholder groups
Asset valuation and cost data

Asset characteristics
Depth-damage functions
Population data
Sociodemographic data
Insurance data
Critical service dependence

Assessment



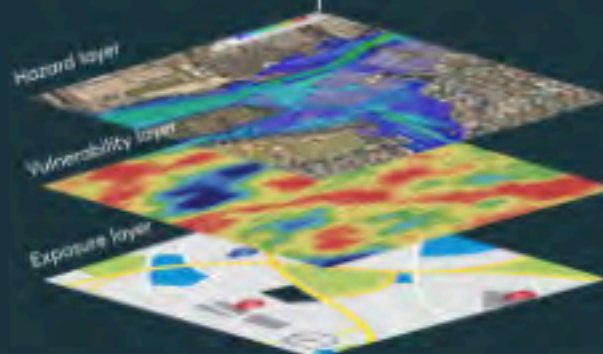
Hazard assessment



Exposure assessment



Vulnerability assessment



Layers

Many different types of data will be integrated into a GIS and represented as a map layer.

This can include streets, parcels, zoning, buildings, roads, asset costs, people, land use, topography, flood models, etc.

By overlaying these datasets, the GIS allows the spatial relationships between flood hazards, exposed assets, and stakeholder groups to be analysed.

Assessment

Relative risk assessment allows for a comparative evaluation of risk across locations, populations, or assets, based on the combination of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability.

It doesn't usually produce absolute loss figures, instead, it identifies which areas or groups are at higher or lower risk relative to others.

Relative risk assessment



Risk map

Output

The output is a risk map – a spatial visualisation of flood risk showing how flood risk varies throughout the region.

It illustrates where and to what degree flooding could affect elements at risk, which allows us to estimate what could be damaged and / or lost to translate this to monetary terms and broader societal costs.

HAZARD

Hazard assessment is the starting point for understanding flood impacts, defining how flooding behaves across the landscape.

Significant modelling has already been completed by the most councils, meaning this analysis builds on established flood scenarios – including the New Zealand Flood Map being developed by Earth Sciences New Zealand that unifies best available local, regional, and national-scale flood risk data for the whole country. This maintains consistency nationally and with earlier work while allowing new scenarios to be incorporated as they emerge.

A key component of the hazard assessment is analysing the temporal and spatial evolution of flooding events. GIS enables spatial analysis by combining terrain data, hydrological and hydraulic data, and environmental datasets, amongst others, as inputs into mapped flood hazard layers.

In broad strokes, hazard inputs are answering three questions:



how much water?

flood depth, to show where flooding occurs in a geographic area



where can it go?

flood extent, to indicate severe potential damages and safety risks



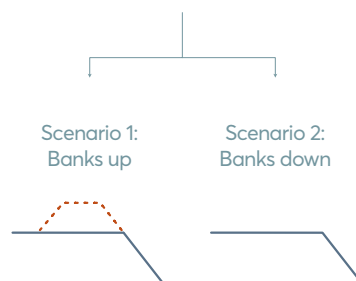
how does it move?

flood duration, to determine how long an area remains inundated during and after a flood event

- Inputs in the platform**
- Topography and terrain data
 - Hydrological data
 - Hydraulic modeling data
 - Flood scenarios
 - Land use / surface data
 - Meteorological data

These inputs allow flood behaviour to be modelled spatially and over time, producing hazard layers that describe the physical characteristics of flooding.

The resulting outputs establish the physical basis of flood risk and provide the evidence needed to assess exposure and vulnerability in subsequent stages of the analysis.



EXPOS

While hazard assessment describes how flooding occurs, exposure assessment focuses on what is physically located within the flood footprint under each scenario.

Exposure assessment identifies 'elements at risk', or who and what's exposed to potential loss or damage when flooding occurs. These can be assets, systems, and people.

Physical assets can be categorised to dwellings, buildings, land, critical infrastructure, and natural systems. The relevant stakeholder – person, community, demographic, entity – associated with the asset is also identified.

Physical assets



Assets

- Contents
- Stock
- Vehicles
- Livestock, crops, equipment



Buildings

- Dwellings
- Marae
- Commercial / industrial
- Community / social
- Agricultural
- Lifestyle / rural

The next step is to identify the people and stakeholder groups associated with these built environment elements spatially, so that their exposure to flood events can be assessed.

While the physical assets define what may be directly affected by flooding, understanding exposure also requires identifying who relies on, occupies, owns, or manages those assets.

These groups represent, for instance, those who may experience direct, indirect, or wider impacts from flooding.

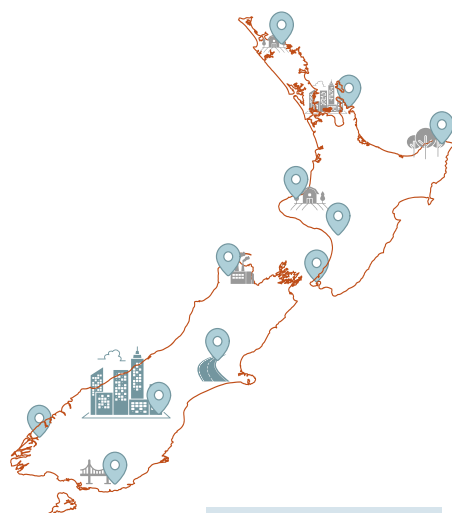
Stakeholders may include residents, businesses, landowners, infrastructure operators, community organisations, and wider population.

These exposure outputs provide the foundation for the next stage: vulnerability assessment.



Sandbagging of the Strand in Parnell, Auckland (2026)
Photo credit: Dean Purcell/NZ Herald

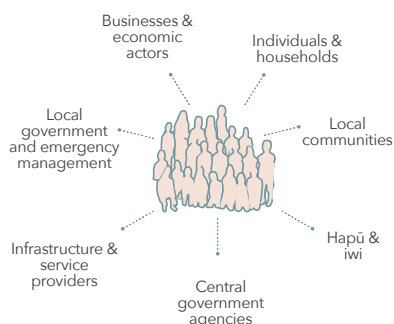
SURE



The first step is to identify the elements at risk of flooding within the built environment of across all the region – assets, buildings, infrastructure, and natural systems.

- Critical infrastructure**
 - Rail lines
 - Roads
 - Telecommunication
 - Three waters
 - Transport
 - Power
- Natural systems**
 - Water systems
 - Taonga sites
 - Geological sites
 - Landscape

Relevant stakeholders

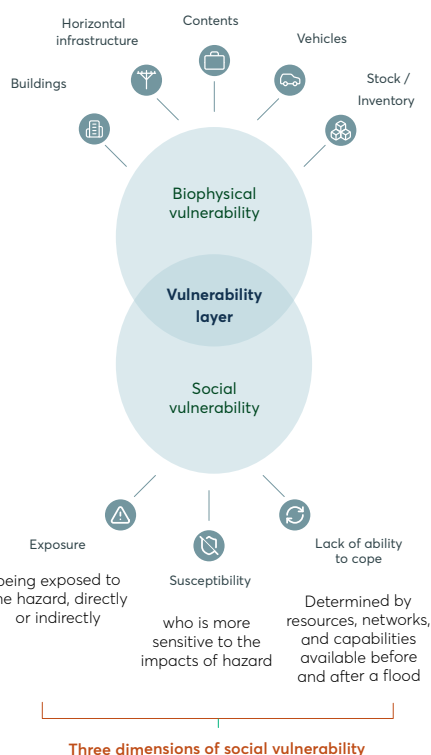


Inputs in the platform

- Assets / Built environment
- Infrastructure data
- Land use and natural systems
- Stakeholder groups
- Asset valuation and cost data

VULNERABILITY

Understanding vulnerability is crucial to assessing potential consequences of flooding – basically, it shows how badly those exposed will be damaged or affected. This analysis considers two components of vulnerability – physical vulnerability that leads to economic damage and social vulnerability that may lead to society's inability to cope and recover with flooding.



Biophysical vulnerability captures the physical dimension of risk – the measurable, tangible elements exposed to flooding such as built and natural environment and assets. It focuses on what can be physically affected and how severely.

This includes factors such as building materials and design, infrastructure resilience (roads, power, water systems), land elevation, drainage capacity, and proximity to coastlines or floodplains.

Traditional flood risk assessments typically only capture biophysical vulnerability. But flooding is not just a physical event, it is also social.

Social vulnerability captures the human dimension of risk – the degree to which people and communities may be vulnerable to adverse impacts of flooding and their capacity to respond and recover.

It focuses on social, economic, and cultural factors – such as health and wellbeing, socio-demographic characteristics and circumstances, and pre-existing conditions – that shape how impacts are felt and managed.



'Everything's gone': Aftermath of torrential rain in Wellington (2026)
Photo credit: Lawrence Smith/Stuff

Inputs in the platform

- Functions
- Population data
- Sociodemographic data
- Insurance data
- Critical service dependency

QUANTIFYING THE IMPACTS FROM THE RISK ASSESSMENT

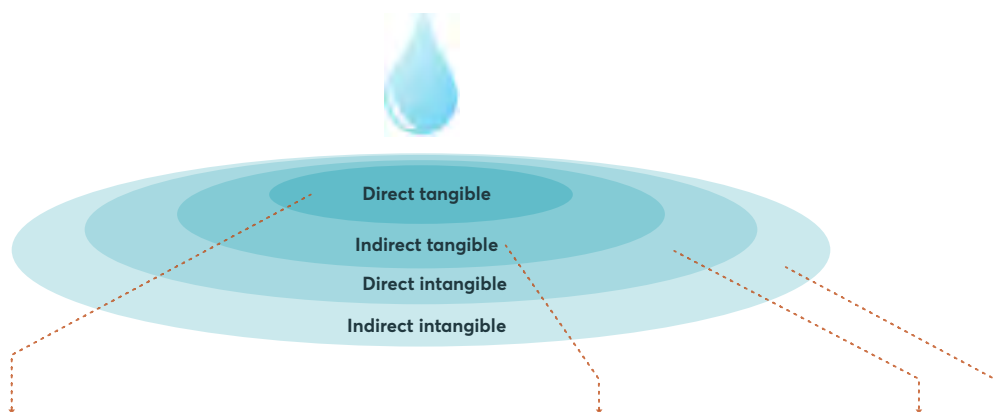
The output map illustrates what the potential consequences are to allow for damage estimation – therefore avoided costs of having flood resilience.

Put simply, the impact analysis identifies the potential damage and loss arising from flooding by describing the physical harm to assets and the wider disruptions experienced by communities and economic systems.

From assessing flood extent to mapping the impacts.

Having mapped where flooding may occur, the assessment now turns to understanding its potential impacts. Impact analysis takes the risk identified in the risk map and translates it into the consequences for elements at risk – people, communities, built environment, and assets – considering what could be damaged, lost, or disrupted physically, economically, culturally, or socially.

This provides the foundation for assessing how costs are avoided because flooding is reduced. The benefits of flood risk reduction are primarily realised through the avoided costs of flood damage that would occur in the absence of mitigation, as well as any enhanced value for production or consumption achieved by lowering the risk of flooding. In essence, flood mitigation provides economic benefits by reducing both the frequency and severity of flood events, thereby protecting assets and livelihoods.



Direct tangible impact refers to the physical damage caused by floodwaters to assets and the built environment.

This includes damage to homes, buildings, roads, bridges, utilities, and other infrastructure, as well as impacts to land such as agricultural areas or natural systems.

Direct impacts are typically the most visible and immediate consequences of flooding and can often be estimated using information on asset type, location, and value within affected areas.

Indirect tangible impacts arise from the disruption that flooding causes to economic and social activity.

Even where assets are not directly damaged, flooding can interrupt transport networks, close businesses, disrupt supply chains, and limit access to essential services.

These impacts can extend beyond the flooded area itself, affecting workers, businesses, and communities that rely on the affected systems.

Direct and indirect intangible impacts

capture the broader social, cultural, and environmental consequences of flooding that are more difficult to measure in monetary terms.

These may include impacts on community wellbeing, displacement of households, disruption to cultural sites and practices, and effects on natural ecosystems.

While harder to quantify, these impacts are an important part of understanding the full consequences of flooding for communities across the region.

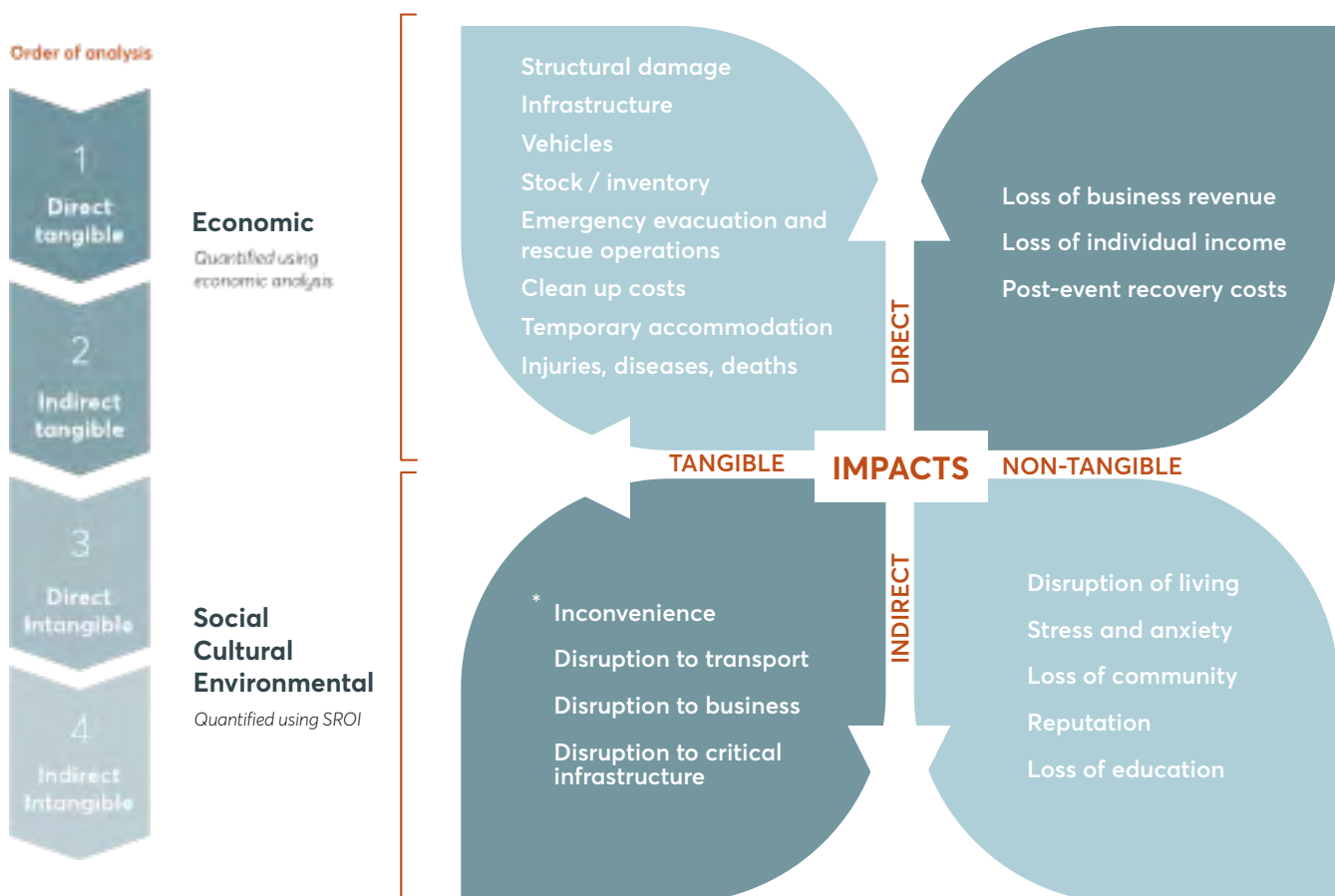
DIFFERENT TYPES OF IMPACTS IN FLOODING SCENARIOS

Understanding the damage and loss as a consequence of flooding allows for estimation of avoided costs from having flood resilience infrastructure.

We are avoiding costs when we protect landowners from flooding.

Impact analysis often estimates both damage and loss to understand the full consequences of flooding. Damage captures the direct physical impacts, while losses capture ongoing disruptions and economic effects that result from those damages – this way, both immediate and longer-term impacts of flood events are accounted for.

The table below, adapted from NZIER, outlines what is in scope for this analysis – note that this list may be subject to change as the analysis progresses.



*These impacts are preliminary and are typically finalised within the SROI following engagement with affected stakeholders.

Putting dollar values on these different types of impacts require different methodologies. The following pages will entail detailed approach for each category of damage.

QUANTIFYING DIRECT TANGIBLE DAMAGES

Direct tangible damages are physical, quantifiable losses of assets and built environment caused by direct contact to flooding.



Consolidated data in RiskScape (such as Ratings database, Census data, LINZ, etc.) will show information as seen on the table.

Parcel information
Address
Category (e.g., Commercial, Dairying, Residential)
Subcategory (e.g., Commercial-retail)
Capital value
Land value
Improvement value
Land cover type
Building age, construction type

This classification underpins the allocation of asset profiles to each property to allow for differentiated estimation of asset holdings based on sector-specific occupancy, economic activity, and land use

Estimation of assets



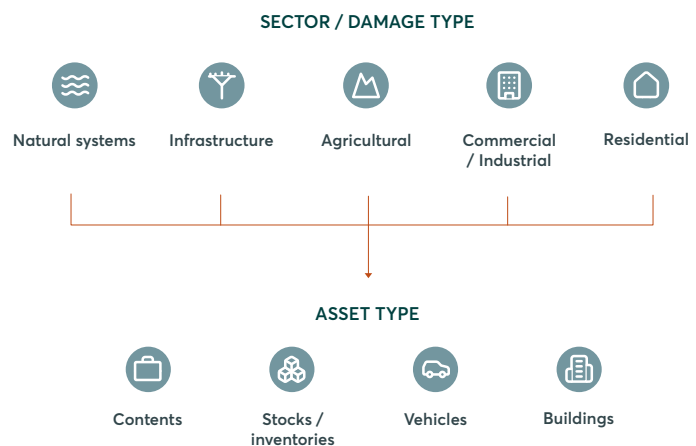
The sector / category type allows allocation of assets profiles typically associated to that sector. The values of those assets are then estimated using other datasets – like national accounts, Council data – along with parcel information.

This way, different estimation of asset holdings are based on sector-specific occupancy, economic activity, and land use.

Asset exposure is spatially aligned with the built environment to estimate direct, tangible losses beyond buildings using real data.

Direct tangible damages to buildings refer to the physical damage to structural and non-structural components, resulting in repair or replacement costs to its pre-event condition. As the severity of damage increases, repair costs rise accordingly.

The first step to assessing the benefits of flood resilience infrastructure is to identify what is directly impacted by a flooding event – as this determines the direct costs. Damages are grouped into broad sectors or 'damage types'. For this analysis, the broad sectors and asset types are:



These categories are grouped as such as they experience flood differently, as well as it helps to organise large numbers of affected assets into manageable groups. These groups are further broken down into subcategories, for instance infrastructure such as roads can be split further to motorway, highway, urban, rural, etc.

Using GIS flood modelling, tangible assets exposed to flooding are mapped and the likely level of damage estimated. This spatial analysis helps identify where physical damage would occur and provides the basis for estimating the economic value of those losses. Because these assets can be valued in monetary terms, the costs associated with repairing or replacing them can be estimated using existing market values or replacement cost estimates.

To assess direct damages, the value of exposed assets is combined with estimates of the proportion of damage likely to occur at different flood depths. Flood models provide information on the expected water depth and extent during a flood event. The resulting estimate represents the direct economic loss caused by flooding, expressed as the cost required to repair or restore the damaged asset.

DIRECT COSTS BEYOND PHYSICAL ASSETS

Damages on physical assets and people are linked to other direct economic losses such as temporary accommodation costs, loss of business revenue and individual income. In addition to direct physical damages to assets, flooding also generates a range of direct response and recovery costs incurred by households, businesses, councils, and government.

Clean-up costs

represent the expenses associated with post-event debris removal, sediment clearance, waste disposal, and the cleaning and sanitisation of affected properties and public spaces.

These costs are estimated based on unit rates for clean-up activities (e.g. per property or per square metre), informed by Council operational data, contractor rates, and evidence from past flood events.

Where available, historical data on clean-up efforts – such as volumes of waste collected, number of properties serviced, and resource requirements – are used to establish relationships between flood extent and clean-up costs. These relationships are then applied to estimate clean-up costs under future flood scenarios.

Emergency response costs

during the event are associated with the different types of emergency response activities triggered by flooding events using existing councils financial and operational data. Historical flood events (i.e., flood depth, rainfall intensity, duration, properties affected, damages) will be analysed to identify the response actions undertaken – such as staffing deployments, equipment use, contractor engagement, and emergency coordination – and the costs associated with each response type.

These costs are then linked to measurable flood characteristics, including extent, duration, and level of impact. The resulting relationships enable emergency response activities and associated costs to be inferred for future flood scenario models.

Temporary accommodation costs

for residential properties are the costs to move to a temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation costs are estimated using publicly available market rental values for equivalent dwellings, based on bedroom size and location, as a proxy.

Health costs

represent the direct medical expenses arising from physical injuries and health conditions attributable to flooding events. These include costs associated with visits to general practitioners, physiotherapy services, and hospital treatment.

Where possible, costs are estimated using standard healthcare unit costs (e.g. per consultation or hospital admission) and scaled based on the number of affected individuals, informed by evidence from past flood events and relevant public health data.



QUANTIFYING INDIRECT TANGIBLE LOSSES

Wider economic losses are estimated using a bottom-up disruption-based modelling approach following physical damage.



The economic effects extend beyond the affected properties.

Beyond the immediate costs of repair, physical damage also results in loss of functionality which gives rise to indirect tangible damages in the form of disruption. Disruption is the loss of normal use or function of an asset due to damage.

Indirect tangible impacts are then captured through a bottom-up disruption-based modelling approach that quantifies the economic consequences of lost functionality following physical damage. Rather than relying solely on aggregate economic multipliers, this approach explicitly models how disruptions to individual assets and activities translate into measurable economic losses over time.

As buildings become inhabitable or unusable, this translates into measurable economic impacts for occupants, including:



Loss of business revenue

Due to operational downtime, reduced access or supply chain disruption. Refers to the decline in income generated by businesses due to operational disruption due to inability to operate from the damaged site, reduced customer access, or supply chain disruption.

Loss of individual income / labour disruption

Due to interruption of employment activities. Refers to the reduction or loss of personal earnings due to disruption of normal work due to missing shifts, reduced hours, or losing clients during building repairment. This varies by industry type as an office worker may be able to work from home, therefore a high recapture, whereas restaurant worker will have a lower recapture as they cannot recover missed shifts.



Post-recovery costs

Pertains to activities following event occurrence undertaken by councils and central Government following flooding events. These include costs associated with restoration of public infrastructure and support services, for instance, provided to affected communities.

Economic losses are estimated using regional economic, land use, and employment data to assess how disruption impacts businesses, industries, and regional productivity over time. These impacts are analysed not only at the site or sector level, but across the wider economy through input-output modelling, which captures how disruption flows through supply chains, employment, household spending, and interconnected industries.

It is recognised that not all losses represent permanent reductions in economic activity. Some impacts may be partially offset over time through recovery, delayed production, or substitution effects. Accordingly, the estimates presented reflect gross disruption-based losses, with recovery dynamics incorporated where appropriate. Input-output modelling assumes fixed production relationships and does not account for capacity constraints, price changes, or adaptive behaviour. As a result, it is most appropriate for smaller-scale disruptions and may overestimate impacts in large-scale events.

THE IMPACT ON PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Wider social impacts of flooding are quantified in monetary terms using SROI-informed social valuation methodology, based on literature and pending future community fieldwork by some of the councils.

SROI-informed methodology

- 
Identify stakeholders
 Identify stakeholders through parcels affected by flooding in GIS risk model. Validate list with Council and other relevant groups
- 
Map outcomes
 Construct an impact map that sets out how flood exposure leads to a range of social outcomes
- 
Evidence outcomes and assign value
 Collect and analyse data through surveys, interviews, and secondary sources to validate identified outcomes to quantify scale and assign appropriate financial proxies
- 
Establish impact
 Adjust results to reflect additionality where relevant including deadweight, attribution, and drop-off
- 
Incorporate findings into AAL model
 Generated monetary values are incorporated into the AAL model to estimate the expected annual losses with and without infrastructure, and avoided losses attributable to infrastructure

This analysis adopts an SROI-informed social valuation methodology that feeds into an Annual Average Loss (AAL) framework.

The effects of flooding on people, communities, and business owners can significantly outweigh the impacts on buildings and properties, and putting a dollar figure on these impacts is significantly more difficult.

Non-market impacts are monetised using an SROI-informed valuation framework, drawing on Aotearoa New Zealand and international methodologies and publicly available data from Statistics New Zealand and other authoritative sources, and integrated into an Annual Average Loss (AAL) flood risk modelling approach.

AAL modelling is a risk-based approach used to estimate the expected annual value of flood-related losses by combining the probability of flood events with their associated consequences over time. AAL is used to integrate direct and indirect tangible losses with monetised social, cultural, environmental, and economic impacts derived from an SROI-informed valuation framework.

These combined loss estimates are modelled under two scenarios: a "banks down" scenario representing conditions without flood resilience infrastructure, and a "banks up" scenario representing conditions with flood resilience infrastructure in place. For each scenario, losses are estimated across a range of flood magnitudes and weighted by their probability of occurrence to produce an annualised expected loss value.

The difference between the two scenarios represents the avoided annual losses attributable to flood resilience infrastructure, capturing the reduction in total expected flood impacts across all consequence types, including both market and non-market effects.



'Lost everything': Auckland family's red sticker nightmare after swimming to escape, no insurance
 Photo credit: Givealittle

PERSPECTIVES: SEATS AT THE TABLE



I'm Jon Roygard, I'm Group Manager Catchment Operations for Horizons Regional Council, and I've been working in catchment and environment management in the Council for around 25 years.

Horizons stretches from Whanganui down to the Horowhenua and all the way across to the East Coast. We have three major catchments plus a sizeable number of smaller ones, and about \$1.24 billion invested in more than 3,800 flood resilience assets. So we have a really big area of the country that we're responsible for, but there are only about 110,000 ratepayers in the whole Horizons region.

In the photo I'm standing on the Botanical Road bridge over the Mangaone stream in Palmerston North, which is part of the Manawatū catchment. The river extends all the way from the Manawatū Gorge out to Foxton Beach on the coast, and it passes through everything from steep rocky gorges to heavily built-up urban areas to really valuable farmland.

One of the most challenging areas is Palmerston North where we have 90,000 people, so we need high-quality infrastructure to keep everyone safe. The stop banks on this stream are engineered to 1-in-500 year standard, and we've used a lot of engineering to do that – concrete and steel sheet piles and rock walls, and carefully designed structures. And you can see why when you stand on the stop banks, because you're looking at the roofs of houses and businesses right up against them. There's not much room to move, and not much room for error.

To make this happen we have to work very closely with the Palmerston North City Council, NZTA, Kiwirail, the power companies, landowners, business owners ... we all have a stake in flood resilience, and we all need a seat at the table. So we collectively work on challenges together, like the growth of the city and how we accommodate that. For instance, what was previously farmland with perhaps 1-in-50 year protection gets converted to a business park or a new subdivision, so we need to look at what level of service is needed for that new use.

That's our big challenge. We have a growing and expanding city, so we have to pay a lot of attention to spatial planning and what it means when it comes to flood resilience. Adding more hard surfaces always adds more stormwater to the river systems, so good urban design has its part to play too. It's a complex system and it takes a lot of work and a lot of thought and a lot of discussion to make sure it functions the way the community expects.

Funding is our big issue. We may have more than 2 million hectares in our region, but there just aren't that many people here compared to the big cities. So the co-investment from the government has been a huge factor for us, and has allowed us to start catching up on infrastructure the community can't afford on its own.

And it's worked – we were able to upgrade the flood control gates at Moutoa thanks to the Tranche 2 funding, and we replaced and improved the old 1960s-era components. In the storms earlier this year, the upgraded gates worked exactly as designed and kept water out of the farms and towns and people's houses, so that was a pretty huge thing.

Working together makes all the difference, and getting the long-term funding partnership in place with the government will have a massive impact for the future of this region.



Jon Roygard | Group Manager Catchment Operations
Horizons Regional Council

Photo credit: Tim D

HOW THE NATIONAL PLATFORM WORKS

Scenario modelling

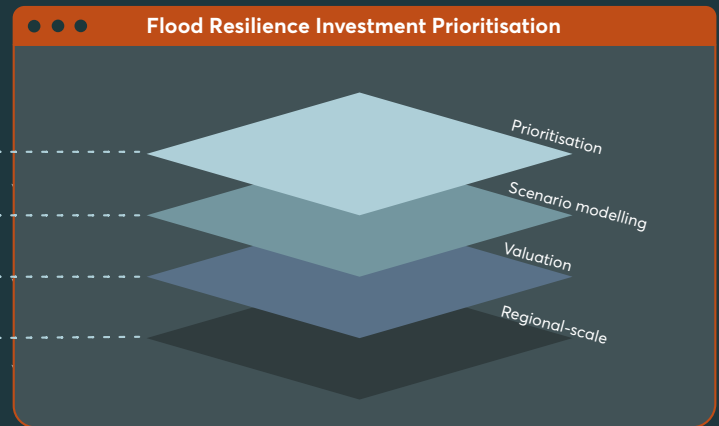
Enable councils and decision-makers to test different flood resilience approaches and assess their likely impacts. This includes evaluating combinations of protection, accommodation, retreat and avoidance measures to understand how different interventions affect flood risk, resilience outcomes and investment requirements.

Valuation layers

Identify where flood impacts occur and quantify the value at risk by bringing together information on communities, infrastructure, economic assets, cultural values and environmental outcomes to allow decision makers to better understand the potential costs and benefits of different investment options.

Prioritisation modelling

Provides a transparent and consistent framework for assessing investment options at both regional and national levels. Agreed prioritisation lenses are utilised by decision makers to understand the trade-offs between competing investments and direct funding towards projects that deliver the greatest overall benefit.



Regional flood modelling

Regional flood models provide a consistent national picture of flood hazards across catchments. They show the extent, depth and frequency of flooding under current and future conditions. Input data, updated as necessary, include, but not limited to:

- Topography and terrain data
- Hydrological and hydraulic inputs
- Land surface
- Flood infrastructure assets

End users



National agencies



Local and regional councils



Communities and other stakeholders



Business owners and investors



Insurance sector

THE PLATFORM IS A NATIONAL PORTAL FOR THE SECTOR

FRIPP will provide a common toolset and approach accessible to councils and national decision makers alike.

A single platform for better investment decisions.

One of the key objectives of the FRIPP is to enable decision makers at all levels – community, regionally, nationally – to assess options and set priorities for the decades ahead.

FRIPP will be designed to connect with existing flood models and other authoritative spatial datasets held across regional councils, central government agencies, and infrastructure providers. Ongoing engagement with data custodians will be prioritised to ensure datasets remain consistent, accurate, and up to date, while promoting greater alignment and interoperability across organisations. Where possible and useful, links will be maintained to external systems within regional councils and nationally – so important data about everything from regional land use maps to employment data is kept up to date automatically. This will reduce duplication, improve data quality, and provide the sector with a shared, trusted evidence base for flood risk management and investment prioritisation.

As a national platform, it will support a wide range of users – from regional councils, central government agencies, and emergency management organisations through to infrastructure providers, consultants, researchers, iwi and hapū, and local communities.

The platform is more than a flood resilience initiative for the sector; it is a national capability that supports wider government priorities and objectives.



National Infrastructure Plan (2026)

Improve access to high-quality natural hazard data so councils and communities can make more effective, affordable decisions and better manage insurance pressures. This will also support greater coordination to manage flood risk hazards.



Natural Hazard Commission Risk Reduction Strategy (2025-2029)

Translate and share hazard risk data and information to reduce current and prevent future risk.

Encourage Aotearoa New Zealand's approach to risk reduction to be innovative and world class.



National Adaptation Plan (2022-2028)

Enabling better risk-informed decisions by providing access to the latest climate projection data,

Driving climate-resilient development in the right places

Laying foundations for a range of adaptation options including managed retreat

CASE STUDY: OUR PLAINS OUR FUTURE

The FRIPP approach is being prototyped within the Our Plains Our Future project within the Waikato.

Hauraki District Council and Waikato Regional Council are working with the communities on the Hauraki Plains to develop a plan for the future in the Our Plains Our Future (OPOF) project. OPOF is using a dynamic adaptive pathways planning process in partnership with the community to address natural hazard risk, particularly focusing on flood risk.

In order for the risks of flooding to be understood and the options explored, the OPOF project has developed a sophisticated model within the Resilience Explorer® GIS platform, which provides insights that can be navigated geospatially in an online portal. This approach is strongly aligned with the FRIPP approach, and the OPOF project has successfully demonstrated the value of flood modelling and adaptation planning for regional decision makers and community members alike.

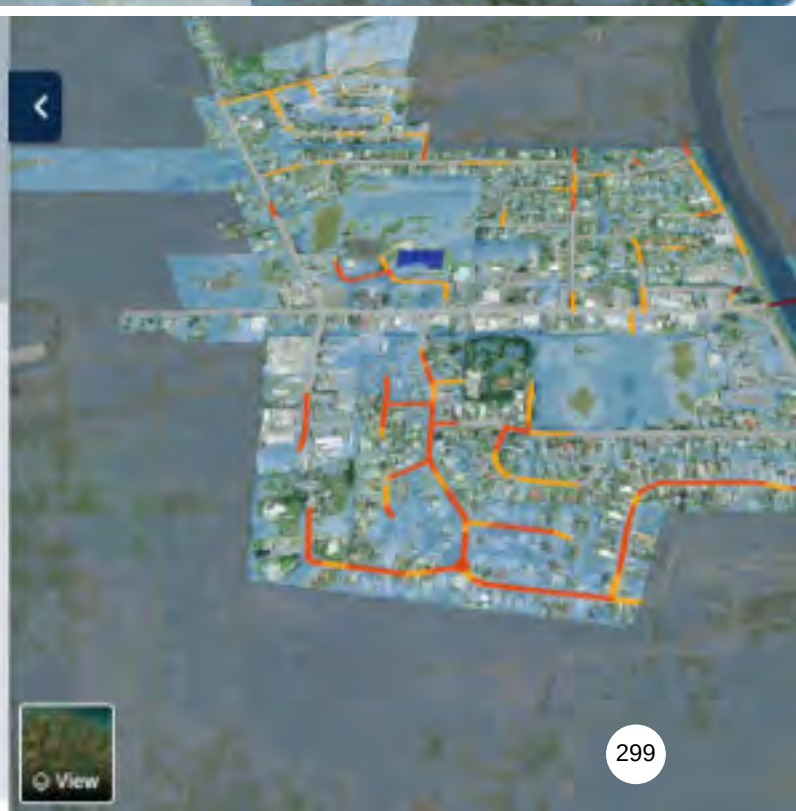
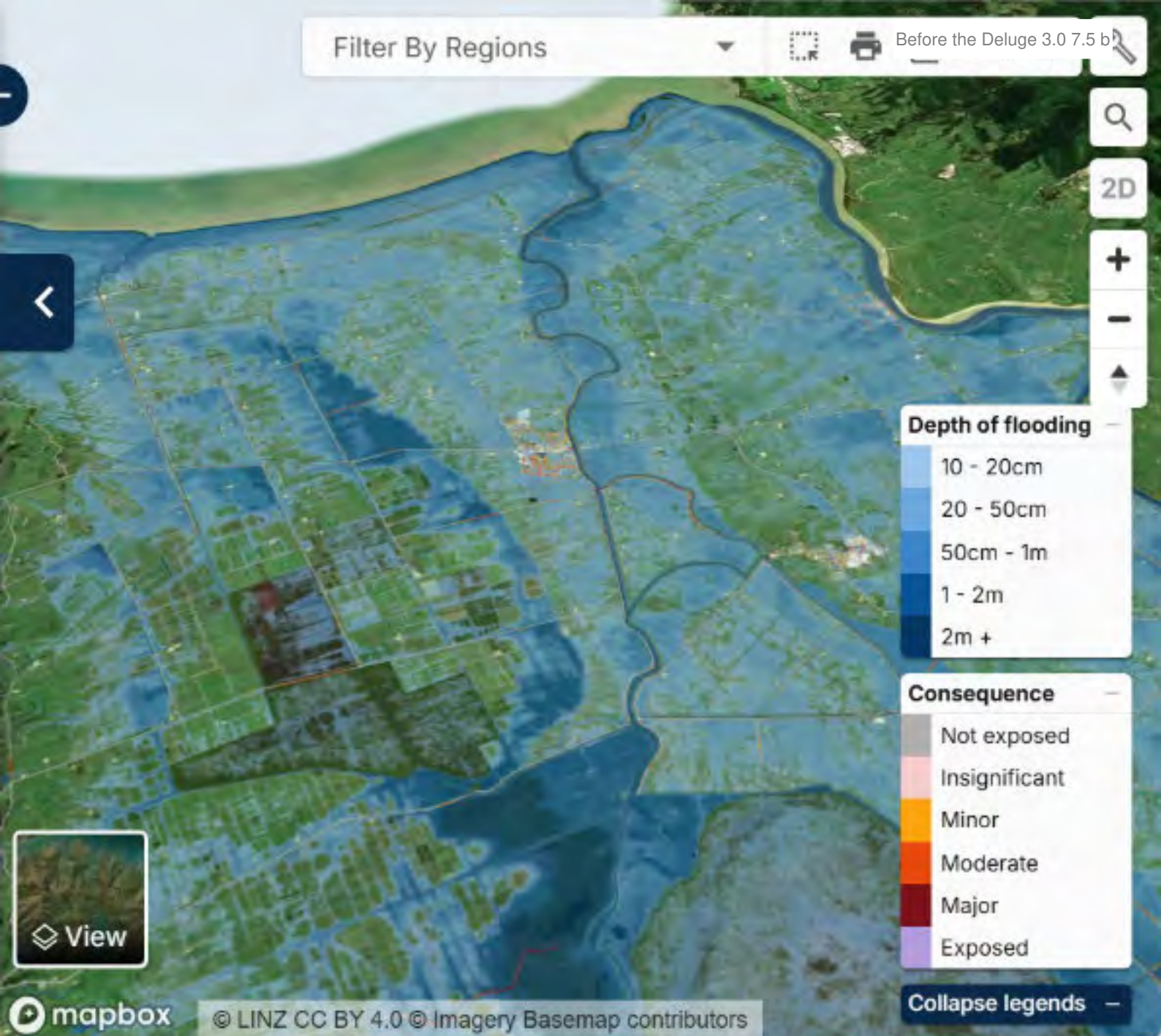
Additional work is planned in coming months, aimed at adding valuations and cost-benefit assessment to OPOF's Resilience Explorer® platform. This will enrich the information available to councils and the community and enable more sophisticated options assessment when it comes to developing the adaptation pathways for the Hauraki Plains.

While the software components may not be the same as the FRIPP platform, the technical requirements being developed in the Waikato are directly applicable, and the OPOF project is serving as a very successful test-bed for the approaches that can be scaled up nationally.

The screenshot on the following page shows an example of an output from OPOF's Resilience Explorer® platform. It shows the expected damage to roads in Ngātea from a large flood event scenario, allowing councils and the community to understand the risks and impacts of these events. This is a subset of the functionality that the FRIPP platform will deliver.



The Waihou River at the Te Aroha bridge in the Waikato
Photo credit: Saliency



PERSPECTIVES: WHY WE DO THIS



I'm Leigh Griffiths, and in my day job I'm General Manager of Hazards at Environment Canterbury. At the same time I'm also the national convener of the River Managers SIG for Te Uru Kahika.

One way or another I spend a lot of time thinking about and working on how we make our communities safer in what's becoming a pretty challenging environment, both in Canterbury and nationally. Most days that means talking about infrastructure, data modelling, funding, and all the other complexities of natural hazards – of which flooding is the one most New Zealanders are vulnerable to.

Like the other river managers across the country, I also have a role to play in our civil defence function – it's one of my major areas of responsibility at ECan. And sometimes, like in the big floods of 2021, that means calls in the middle of the night and very long hours as we try and predict where flooding is going to happen and how we try and keep people safe.

Working in flood resilience it's easy to focus on the rivers and the infrastructure, but I don't think we can underestimate the sociological and psychological impacts that flooding has on communities. I've certainly talked to plenty of people on the phone that are awake during the night or out in their paddocks, watching the water come, worrying about how high it's going to get and realising the roads are impassable or the bridge is flooded, and they're home alone.

Flooding isn't just about cleaning mud off the roads and maybe patching up houses. It really does have an impact on people's well-being and their emotional states, for whole communities. The biggest and hardest part of the job for river managers up and down the country is the unseen stuff; it's the way people feel when the big rains come because they remember back to the last big flood and their vulnerability to something they couldn't predict or control.

So when we stand in community meetings and talk about affordability or levels of service, there's always the deep currents in the room: the worry that people can lose their homes or their livelihoods, or they won't be able to get their kids or their grandparents to safety if the water rises too fast or there's not enough warning.

I've walked through silt-covered paddocks, homes and businesses, and what always sticks with me isn't the damage; it's the looks on the faces of the people. Kiwis are pretty stoic in disasters and we rally together when things are tough, but there's no denying the stress and anguish is real.

That's what keeps me awake at night in a big storm – sure, I'm thinking about how the flood schemes will perform. But mostly, I'm hoping we've done enough and that all the people in the communities across the plains, the big ones and the small ones, from the mountains to the sea, that everyone stays safe. That's the real reason we do what we do.

Leigh Griffiths | General Manager Hazards
Environment Canterbury

Photo credit: Tim D

5

The next steps



The Waimakariri River, Canterbury
Photo credit: Tim D

THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR A NATIONAL PIPELINE

We need to meet the challenges of our times by providing certainty to communities and businesses.

A visit to the Tairāwhiti region is like taking a trip to the future of New Zealand. This is where the impacts of climate change and land use change and demographics are written across the landscape for all to see.

Weather events that would have resulted in states of emergency a couple of decades ago are now treated like business as usual. As the saying goes, the future is already here – it's just not widely distributed yet.

So the issues Tairāwhiti experiences today are the ones that will affect every community and every council in the country in the decades ahead, whether or not we're ready. Which is why Te Uru Kahika has prepared this business case – to provide a pathway forward, collectively, in a way that makes good economic sense.

As the experience of Tairāwhiti shows, our investments need long-term consistency in order to provide certainty for communities and businesses. To do that, we need an investment approach that endures for decades.

So the next step is to agree with the Crown that long-term co-investment in flood risk resilience is not only the right thing to, it's the cost-effective and pragmatic thing to do. We are therefore seeking a Crown commitment of \$240 million per annum over the next decade, alongside the matching \$160 million per annum from regional and unitary councils.

Our request is to work with Ministers and officials to determine how to make this long-term co-investment commitment work: the prioritisation approach, funding criteria, responsible agencies, legislative support if necessary, and other key matters.

So Te Uru Kahika welcomes the opportunity to build on our co-investment successes to date, and to talk further about the shape and mechanisms for the decades ahead.



Chair, Greater Wellington Regional Council



Chair, Canterbury Regional Council

On behalf of chairs and mayors of Regional and Unitary Councils of New Zealand



Silt sits across farmland in Tairāwhiti following Cyclone Gabrielle (2023)
Photo credit: Gisborne District Council

THANKS AND CREDITS

Te Uru Kahika

Te Uru Kahika Co-Chairs	Darran Ponter (GWRC), Dr Deon Swiggs (Ecan)
Te Uru Kaihika team	Graeme Campbell CPEng, Fellow ENZ – Principal Advisor Flood Risk Management Nick Brown, Chris Dolley, Paula Chapman

River Managers Special Interest Group

SIG Convener	Leigh Griffiths, GM Hazards, Environment Canterbury
SIG members	Northland Regional Council Kaipara District Council Waikato Regional Council Bay of Plenty Regional Council Hawkes' Bay Regional Council Taranaki Regional Council Horizons Regional Council Greater Wellington Regional Council Gisborne District Council Tasman District Council Nelson City Council Marlborough District Council Environment Canterbury West Coast Regional Council Otago Regional Council Southland Regional Council

Business case production

Business case development and design	Salience Aotearoa – Kent Duston, Jammayca Santos
Original photography	Tim D (timdfilm.com)
Additional photography	Kent Duston, Zara Hawthorne

Special thanks to

Interviewees	Leigh Griffiths, Mark Townsend, Greg Ryan, Manon Prin, Radford Gulliver, Phil Downes, Shaun McCracken, David Aires, Mike Jensen, Graeme Campbell
Development consultant	John Hutchings, Hutch Consulting

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Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Dr Deon Swiggs, Chair Canterbury Regional Council
Judith Earl-Goulet, General Manager Catchment Implementation Canterbury Regional Council

Benefits of regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to share with the Canterbury Mayoral Forum the report prepared by Heuser|Whittington, on behalf of Te Uru Kahika (Regional and unitary councils Aotearoa), on the benefits to primary production of regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **receives the Heuser|Whittington report on the benefits to primary production of regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions**
2. **notes that regional biosecurity work delivers strong and consistent economic returns**
3. **considers careful transfer of regional biosecurity functions in any local government transition to avoid significant losses to primary production**

Background

2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) recognises the importance of the work to manage pests to help protect livelihoods and biodiversity hotspots. Biosecurity in Canterbury is focused on protecting our region's economy, cultural values, health, production, recreations spaces and indigenous biodiversity from pests and invasive organisms.
3. There is a specific action in the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 to support Biosecurity Advisory Groups as forums for working together to promote and encourage community involvement in pest management in Waitaha Canterbury.

Economic return on biosecurity work

4. [Benefits of regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions](#) (the Report), commissioned by the partnership of New Zealand's 16 regional and unitary councils – Te Uru Kahika – reveals that regional biosecurity work delivers strong and consistent

economic returns and warns that disruption during local government reform could risk New Zealand facing an estimated \$1.7 billion in net costs.

5. The report, prepared by Heuser|Whittington, draws on data from all 16 regional and unitary councils and reviews cost-benefit evidence from across the sector.
6. Every quantitative cost-benefit analysis of terrestrial pest management reviewed found positive net benefits. In Canterbury and Otago alone, harmonised analysis found regional biosecurity programmes deliver around \$2 billion in net benefits.

Current investment levels

7. Regional and unitary councils invest around \$142 million a year managing pests across 13.2 million hectares of productive land, helping protect a primary sector that contributes around \$34 billion to New Zealand's GDP.
8. The report models a five-year disruption to regional biosecurity programmes and estimates a net cost of \$1.7 billion from escalating pest damage and the cost of re-establishing control. It highlights that investment in keeping pests under control is a lot less than what it cost to manage when they are out of control.
9. The benefits of this work are often national. Regional biosecurity supports productive land, export resilience, biodiversity, and New Zealand's international reputation. But the report finds 78 percent of regional biosecurity costs are funded from council rates and regional revenue.
10. The biosecurity work by regional and unitary councils reflects decades of capability in relation to this function. This includes specialist staff, pest data, surveillance, compliance tools, landholder relationships, local ecological knowledge and ability to co-ordinate across property boundaries and regions.

Next steps

11. Any transition, as a result of local government reform, needs to consider the implications of any disruptions to biosecurity work to avoid significant losses to primary production
12. Work is underway by Te Uru Kahika to quantify the benefits to biodiversity of regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions.
13. When finalised, the results of that work will be provided to the Mayoral Forum.

Attachment

- **Attachment 1:** The value of regional biosecurity (A3 summary of report)

The value of regional biosecurity

A relatively small, shared investment that protects New Zealand's primary production and native species



Regional and
Unitary Councils
Aotearoa

Heuser
Whittington

Regional and unitary council bio... 7.6 b

Ratepayers pay **78%** of a **\$142 million** annual insurance premium to avoid a **\$1.7 billion** loss.

\$142m

spent each year, across 13.2m
hectares of productive land

\$34bn

of annual primary-sector GDP that
biosecurity programmes help protect

78%

funded by regional ratepayers with
national benefits

\$1.7bn

net cost of a 5-year disruption; **12×** one
year's programme spend

≈2×

estimated avoided production losses
each year (~\$285m)

WHAT REGIONAL AND UNITARY COUNCILS DO

Six biosecurity functions, delivered region-wide

- **Pest control operations:** trapping, poisoning, biological control and physical removal of pest animals and plants
- **Surveillance & monitoring:** detecting new incursions and measuring programme effectiveness
- **Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) rules and enforcement:** Good Neighbour Rules and landowner compliance
- **Landowner coordination:** across boundaries, with iwi, communities, DOC, MPI, TBfree NZ and others
- **Awareness & education:** driving voluntary compliance and early reporting
- **Science & data:** pest databases, CBAs and national evidence

Independent reviews (Castalia 2025; Sapere 2025) back delivery at regional scale. National programmes cannot replicate the coordination, continuity and landowner relationships.

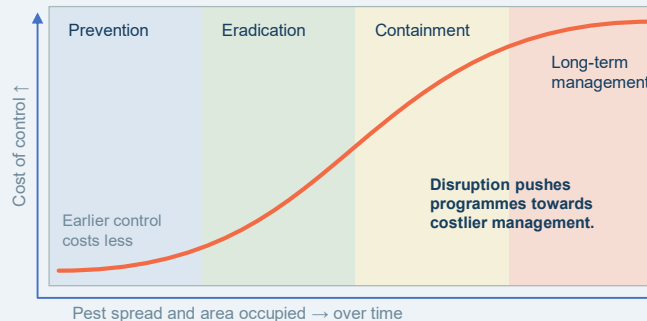
WHO PAYS, AND WHO BENEFITS

A funding mismatch reform should fix

- Benefits flow to primary producers, exporters and communities **across the whole country**
- But **78%** of the cost falls on regional ratepayers. The remaining ~22% is central-government grants, TBfree NZ contributions and other funding — much of it tied to specific national programmes (wilding conifers, wallaby control)

WHY STOPPING COSTS MORE THAN IT SAVES

Pests come back.
Regaining control costs far more if lost.



The invasion curve (stylised). Control is cheapest early; once pests spread, cost climbs steeply through containment to long-term management.

A 5-year disruption is estimated to cost ~\$1.0–3.2bn above any savings. Central estimate ~\$1.7bn.

Pest populations rebuild along exponential growth curves. The TB resurgence of the late 1980s–90s (after possum control lapsed in 1978) is a historical cautionary tale. No central-government programme replaces regional coordination, landowner engagement and pest-plan enforcement.

CASE STUDY: Rook eradication

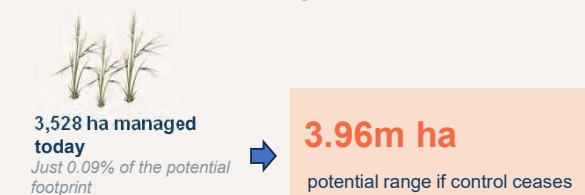
Rook eradication



Coordinated control works beyond Canterbury too:
Hawke's Bay ~81% · Horizons ~97%

Canterbury reached zero by 2023, which depends on the regions that still hold rooks maintaining control. The Hawke's Bay programme returns **\$22 per \$1 over 10 years, \$128 over 50.**

CASE STUDY: Chilean needle grass



National present-value losses reach \$192m–\$1.16bn under long-run spread scenarios. In Canterbury's cost-benefit analysis, sustained control is the only positive-value option.

BIOSECURITY SUPPORTS BIODIVERSITY

16 out of 16 councils reported biodiversity co-benefits

Regional biosecurity generates significant biodiversity outcomes as a co-benefit of protecting primary production. This is through the same operations, relationships, and institutional capability that underpins pest management. Most of these benefits are not captured in the headline economy — estimates Kiwi recoveries - native canopy restoration - lizard rebounds.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Nigel Bowen, Chair

Central government engagement

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek the Mayoral Forum's agreement to the proposed approach for Canterbury Mayoral Forum engagement with central government leading into the general election, and to support preparation for post-election briefings.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **approves the approach to pre-election briefing material for the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's engagement with New Zealand political parties**
2. **notes that the Secretariat will prepare post-election briefing material for the incoming Prime Minister and Ministers following the 2026 central government general election.**

Key points

2. The New Zealand general election will be held on Saturday 7 November 2026.
3. Before the election, there will be opportunities for the Canterbury Mayoral Forum to engage with all political parties to promote Canterbury and seek commitments to support ongoing investment and opportunities for Waitaha Canterbury communities.
4. Following the election, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum will want to develop incoming briefings for the new Prime Minister and government Ministers. This is an opportunity to seek early input into the development of these briefings.

Background

5. The [Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028](#) articulates the Mayoral Forum's vision and priorities for this triennium.
6. Along with the Plan for Canterbury, the Forum has prepared [Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready](#), which focuses on five key pillars where we have advanced our shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges we face and our priorities for action for the continued economic advancement of Waitaha Canterbury.

7. The Mayoral Forum has also developed *Canterbury Mayoral Forum Delivering for New Zealand* (see Attachment 1) to support the Plan for Canterbury and *World-stage ready* documents.
8. Both the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury and Waitaha Canterbury *World-stage ready* provide agreed priority areas directly linked to advocacy with central government. Pre-election briefings are an opportunity to bring these to the attention of all sides of government.
9. For consistency, the Secretariat will also review both the [Local Government New Zealand manifesto for the next government](#) and [Growing New Zealand from the South: A policy platform for Election 2026](#) prepared by the South Island Chamber of Commerce Network to identify areas of commonality.

Pre-election briefing approach

10. Subject to the agreement of the Mayoral Forum, it is proposed to use the following approach for pre-election briefing with New Zealand political parties:
 - draft letters prepared for each New Zealand political party promoting the Mayoral Forum's elevator pitch: *Canterbury Mayoral Forum – delivering for New Zealand*.
 - an invitation to party leaders and local members of Parliament to meet with the Mayoral Forum when they are in the South Island on their campaign trails, noting that meetings may be held in a variety of locations across Canterbury and will include available Mayoral Forum members.
 - highlight media and photo opportunities across Canterbury connected to specific party policies and Mayoral Forum advocacy. Forum members are asked to identify opportunities in their respective areas that could be included in the briefings to political parties.
11. Priorities and actions from the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury, the five key pillars from *World-stage ready*, and related political party policies, where known, will form the basis of the pre-election briefing letter.

Post-election briefings

12. Following the general election on 7 November, the Secretariat will prepare briefings for the incoming Prime Minister and Ministers, noting that the final make-up of the new government may not be known for some weeks as coalition discussions progress.
13. The draft briefings for incoming Ministers will be provided to the Mayoral Forum for their review and approval prior to being sent.

Next steps

14. Subject to the decision of the Mayoral Forum, the Secretariat will draft letters to New Zealand political parties to support pre-election briefing.

15. Subject to the outcome of the Central Government election on 7 November, the Secretariat will draft incoming briefing letters to the new Prime Minister and Ministers of the incoming government.

Attachment

- **Attachment 1:** Canterbury Mayoral Forum – delivering for New Zealand

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Delivering for New Zealand

Canterbury is helping drive New Zealand's **growth**, **productivity**, and **resilience**.

As one of the country's fastest-growing regions, Canterbury already makes a nationally significant contribution through:


housing supply
and urban growth


food and fibre
production


freight and
logistics connectivity


renewable energy and
innovation opportunities


tourism and regional
economic activity


infrastructure
investment.

Canterbury contributes:


15% of
New Zealand's
exports


13% of
national GDP


almost half of all
South Island freight movements


is one of
New Zealand's
**fastest-growing
populations**



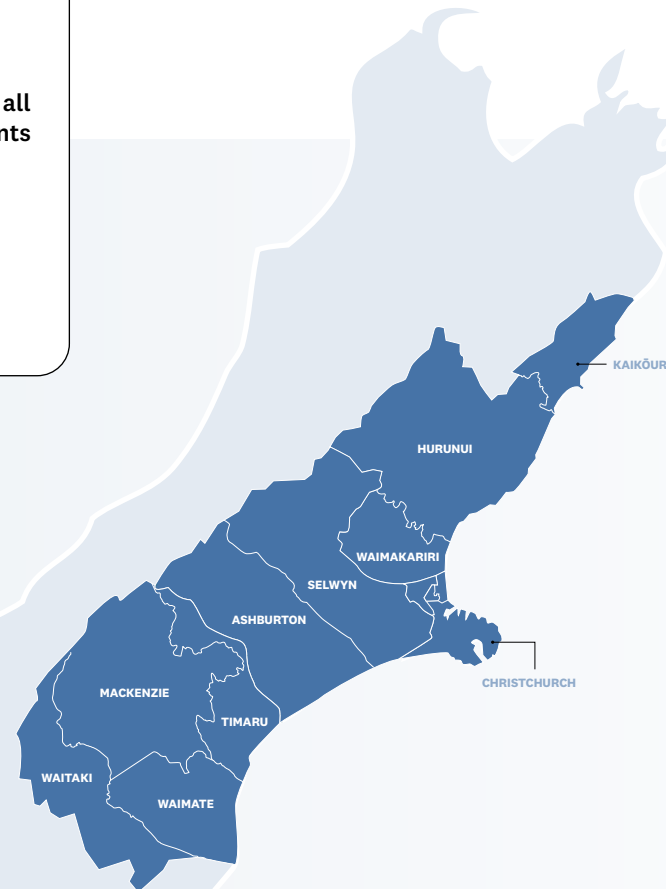


nationally significant food and
fibre, manufacturing, tourism
and innovation sectors.

These contributions support national priorities by:

- increasing economic productivity
- supporting export growth
- improving housing availability
- strengthening supply chain resilience
- enabling workforce and population growth
- strengthening regional and national resilience.

Councils across Canterbury are already investing heavily in transport networks, growth infrastructure, water services, flood protection, housing planning and regional development to deliver these outcomes.



Central government engagement 7.7 b

Continuing these nationally significant outcomes will require:

- transport funding allocations that better reflect Canterbury's role in supporting national freight movements, population growth and economic productivity
- accelerated investment in strategic transport and freight corridors to support housing growth, resilience and efficient movement across the South Island
- infrastructure funding and financing settings that allow councils to deliver water, transport and community infrastructure ahead of population demand
- permanent Crown and local government co-investment in flood protection and resilience infrastructure to protect communities, productive land and nationally significant infrastructure
- coordinated workforce and skills investment to support increasing demand across construction, infrastructure and emerging industry sectors.

Canterbury is ready to continue working alongside Government, mana whenua and the private sector to help deliver practical, nationally significant outcomes for New Zealand communities and the wider economy.

CANTERBURY
Mayoral Forum

Let's talk!



Nigel Bowen
Chair Canterbury
Mayoral Forum

Mayor Timaru District Council
nigel.bowen@timdc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 622 1111



Marie Black
Deputy Chair Canterbury
Mayoral Forum

Mayor Hurunui District Council
marie.black@hurunui.govt.nz
Phone: 021 206 8185



Liz McMillan

Mayor Ashburton
District Council
liz.mcmillan@adc.govt.nz



Dr Deon Swiggs

Chair Canterbury
Regional Council
councillor.swiggs@ecan.govt.nz



Phil Mauger

Mayor Christchurch
City Council
phil.mauger@ccc.govt.nz



Craig Mackle

Mayor Kaikōura
District Council
craig.mackle@kaikoura.govt.nz



Scott Aronsen

Mayor Mackenzie
District Council
scott.aronson@mackenzie.govt.nz



Lydia Gliddon

Mayor Selwyn
District Council
lydia.gliddon@selwyn.govt.nz



Dan Gordon

Mayor Waimakariri
District Council
dan.gordon@wmk.govt.nz



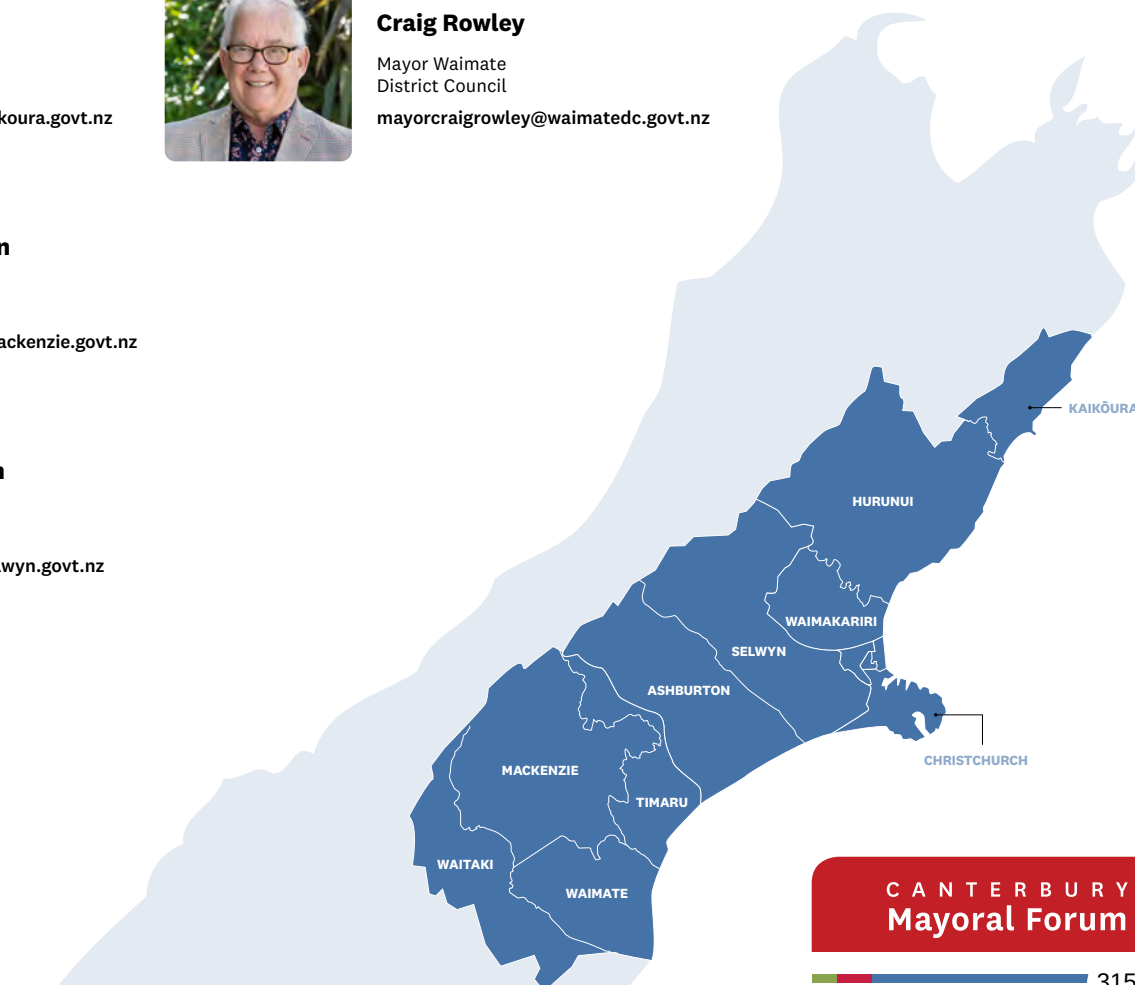
Craig Rowley

Mayor Waimate
District Council
mayorcraigrowley@waimatedc.govt.nz



Melanie Tavendale

Mayor Waitaki
District Council
mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz



Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Hamish Dobbie, Chief Executives Forum

Chief Executives Forum report

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to report on the work of the regional forums since the last Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting on 29 May 2026.

Recommendation

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. receives the quarterly report from the Chief Executives Forum

Regional Forums activity

2. Since the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's May 2026 meeting:
 - the Communications and Engagement Forum met in person on 12 June, and have had several informal sessions to share council updates on Simplifying Local Government discussions
 - the Corporate and Operations Forum met online on 15 June
 - the Economic Development and Policy Forums met online on 19 June
 - the Chief Executives Forum met on 3 August 2026 and held additional meetings on 8 June (Simplifying Local Government and Regional Spatial Planning) and 29 June (Simplifying Local Government).

Chief Executives Forum

3. Key agenda items discussed at the 3 August meeting are noted below. Apart from the Regional Land Transport Plan, these items are included in the 28 August Mayoral Forum agenda.
 - Simplifying Local Government
 - Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Planning
 - Canterbury Water Management Strategy
 - Regional Land Transport Plan –noting funding constraints
 - Canterbury Climate Change Partnership Plan
 - Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus
 - Waitaha Canterbury Regional Energy Workstream

- an update from the Regional Public Service Commissioner
4. Chief Executives will meet next on 19 October 2026.

Triennium strategic workplan

5. The Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 highlights ten specific actions against the three priority issues of strengthening shared prosperity for all our communities; sustainable environmental management of our habitats (land, air, water and ecosystems) and preparing communities for climate change.
6. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum strategic workplan 2025-2028 has been developed to monitor progress on the actions and will be updated with high-level commentary and reported quarterly to the Mayoral Forum (see attachment 1).
7. To support the strategic workplan, the Chief Executives Forum uses a workstream tracker to track and report on progress of the range of initiatives under way that sit under each of the Plan for Canterbury's action areas. The workstream tracker also tracks progress against key projects and programmes from the regional forums. The workstream tracker is updated and reported quarterly to the CEF.
8. The strategic workplan and workstream tracker are both living documents with the ability for additional items to be added as issues for regional collaboration arise.

Attachment

- **Attachment 1:** Canterbury Mayoral Forum strategic workplan 2025-2028

Canterbury Mayoral Forum strategic workplan 2025-2028					Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028
			Update	Objectives	Outcomes
1	Provide leadership for Canterbury through central government reforms, including the development of the regional spatial plan	Sustainable environment Shared Prosperity Climate Change	Submissions Rates Target Model for New Zealand Natural Environment and Planning Bills Emergency Management Bill (No 2) 2026 Simplifying Local Government proposal Regional Spatial Plan draft papers prepared for all councils Agenda item 7.1 Aug 2026	Ensure Canterbury's voice is heard by central government through the reform processes Ensure Canterbury delivers a fit-for-purpose Spatial Plan within the legislated timeframes	
2	Advocate with government to address the chronic underinvestment by central government in Canterbury's transport network	Shared prosperity	Ongoing advocacy to Central Government from Chair Regional Transport Committee and South Island Regional Transport Chairs	Increased share of the NLTF for Canterbury to reflect the contribution of Waitaha Canterbury to New Zealand	
3	Work with the region's Economic Development Agencies to encourage and advocate for economic development opportunities for investment in our regional economy	Shared prosperity	Waitaha Canterbury Regional Investment Prospectus under development CMF Agenda item 7.2 Aug 2026	Ensure Canterbury is at the forefront of economic development, investment and growth opportunities Grow, attract and retain a skilled workforce	
4	Advocate for a centrally coordinated workforce skills and development plan to minimise known/forecast skills gaps through training pathways, foster business growth and support employment opportunities for Cantabrians and New Zealanders	Shared prosperity	Included in Canterbury Mayoral Forum Delivering for New Zealand elevator pitch - will be included in pre-election briefing CMF Agenda item 7.7 Aug 2026	Understanding of future industry skills needs and a plan to address them, resulting in an uplift in wages and incomes	
5	Support the region to foster partnerships and advocate to improve our energy security and systems	Shared prosperity	Energy Strategic Framework and draft Energy Action Plan CMF Agenda item 7.4 Aug 2026 To be included in pre- and post- election briefings	A secure energy sector that supports opportunities for the region and remains at the forefront of an energy transition to attract and retain talent, investment and technologies	
6	Continue oversight of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy	Sustainable environment	CMF Agenda Item 3.1 Aug 2026	Continued local collaboration to support ongoing implementation of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy	
7	Continue to support Te Uru Kahika - Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa in advocating for enduring government co-investment in river and flood management	Sustainable environment Shared prosperity	CMF Agenda Item 7.5 Aug 2026 To be included in pre- and post- election briefings	Enduring and on-going Central Government co-investment in river and flood management	
8	Support the Biodiversity Champions as a key conduit for a shared regional approach to biodiversity	Sustainable environment	Work is progressing with Biodiversity Champions and supporting TA staff on shared regional biodiversity priorities for potential Long-Term Plan consideration	Biodiversity is promoted and woven through Canterbury's living and working landscapes	
9	Support the Biosecurity Advisory Groups a for a for working together to promote and encourage community involvement in pest management in Waitaha Canterbury	Sustainable environment	CMF Agenda Item 7.6 Aug 2026 To be included in pre- and post- election briefings	Community involvement in pest management providing advice and feedback on pest management work	
10	Oversee implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan	Climate Change	CMF Agenda Item 7.3 Aug 2026	Deliver Climate Change Actions	

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 28 August 2026

Presented by: Secretariat

Activities and Engagements May – August 2026

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of activities, engagements, and correspondence since the last Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting on 29 May 2026.

Recommendation

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. receives the update on Canterbury Mayoral Forum activities, engagements and correspondence since the Forum's last meeting on 29 May 2026.

Background

2. A number of activities, meetings, submissions and correspondence occur between Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) meetings. This paper summarises these in one place for the Mayoral Forum's convenience.

Meetings and engagements

3. Since the May quarterly meeting the Mayoral Forum, including their deputies, held additional meetings on 12 June, 6 July and 27 July to discuss Simplifying Local Government Head Start proposals.
4. The Mayoral Forum also hosted, alongside Canterbury Regional Councillors, a Summit focused on Simplifying Local Government and regional functions for all Canterbury councillors.

Correspondence

5. Incoming correspondence
 - A letter from Paul Rosengrave dated 16 August regarding the impact of Total Mobility subsidy reductions on the disabled community. This was also sent directly to all Mayors. The secretariat is currently preparing a response to Mr Rosengrave's letter (Attachment 1).
6. Outgoing correspondence

- A letter to MCERT dated 14 August 2026 regarding Waitaha Canterbury Head Start proposals (Attachment 2).

Submissions

7. No submissions have been lodged since the May 2026 meeting.
8. A submission will be drafted on the Building Amendment Bill for Mayoral Forum consideration prior to the 15 November 26 closing date.
9. Submissions are generally available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website: www.canterburymayors.org.nz.

Briefings

10. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum hosts a webinar for all Canterbury councillors following the quarterly forum meetings to provide an update on matters discussed at the meeting.

Media Release

11. Following the 29 May 2026 meeting, the Mayoral Forum issued a media release covering key matters discussed at the meeting (Attachment 3).
12. There has been one response to a media enquiry (Attachment 4).
13. Proactive media releases are generally available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website: www.canterburymayors.org.nz.

Attachments

- **Attachment 1:** Letter from Paul Rosengrave Total Mobility subsidy
- **Attachment 2:** Letter to MCERT – Waitaha Canterbury Head Start proposals
- **Attachment 3:** Media release following 29 May CMF meeting
- **Attachment 4:** Response to media enquiry

ATTACHMENT 1: Letter from Paul Rosengrave re Total Mobility

16 August 2026

Dear Canterbury Mayors,

Please find below a formal letter regarding my deep concerns over the recent 10% funding and subsidy reductions to the **Total Mobility Transport Scheme**, and the impact these changes are having on disabled residents, families, support networks, and transport users across Canterbury.

This decision severely impacts the financial stability, independence, and well-being of the disabled community, our families and our support network.

I respectfully ask Canterbury's mayors and councils to treat this as a serious local issue, advocate strongly for the restoration and expansion of support, and work together with disabled people, families, providers, and regional transport users before any further changes are made to the Total Mobility scheme.

As this issue directly affects families throughout Canterbury, I am raising it with local leadership across the province so that the impact on our communities is clearly understood and acted on at a regional level.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Rosengrave

Canterbury Mayors

Canterbury Region

New Zealand

16 August 2026

Dear Canterbury Mayors,

I am writing to you to express my deep concern regarding the recent changes to the Total Mobility scheme, specifically the reduction of the fare subsidy from 75% to 65% and the 10% reduction in regional fare caps that took effect on 1 July 2026. While these changes may have been made through national policy settings, their consequences are being felt locally by disabled residents, families, carers, and transport providers across Canterbury.

This funding reduction has hit the disabled community, our families, and our support networks incredibly hard across our towns, cities, and rural communities. For many disabled Cantabrians, this scheme is not a luxury or a matter of convenience. It is a lifeline and a basic necessity. It provides the only accessible door-to-door transport option to reach essential medical appointments, attend rehab, buy groceries, hold employment, attend school or special-needs care facilities, and remain connected to local communities.

Not having access to daily affordable and reliable transportation also has a massive flow-on effect on families and caregiving/support networks, often impacting several other people's lives in each case.

What makes this decision even more painful is that local disabled residents and their families do not appear to have been meaningfully heard before these changes took effect. The disabled community is already under-represented, often ignored, and rarely included when major decisions are made about transport access, mobility, and daily independence.

Canterbury's councils and mayors are well placed to ensure these local voices are heard clearly and respectfully.

Families across Canterbury are already facing immense financial and social challenges in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. At a time when vulnerable households need more support, these reductions force people to make impossible choices between essential travel, healthcare, employment, education, and basic everyday needs. Shifting these costs directly onto disabled individuals creates deeper isolation and severe financial hardship in our own communities.

It is heartbreaking to see funding constraints placed on a scheme that directly supports some of the most vulnerable people in our region. Meanwhile, large sums of ratepayers' money are regularly allocated to non-essential projects. Transport access is not an optional extra for disabled and special-needs residents; it is a foundation for dignity, participation, employment, healthcare, and community life. Rather than reducing this support, Canterbury should be advocating for it to be protected and expanded.

I urge you, as mayors and local leaders across Canterbury, to stand up for our disabled community, publicly acknowledge the local impact of these reductions, advocate for the restoration of full transport support, and work with regional partners to ensure disabled Cantabrians can travel with fairness, dignity, and independence.

Thank you for your time and for considering this matter. I look forward to your response and action.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Rosengrave – Father of a special-needs young adult, and professional driver in the total mobility sector.

CANTERBURY Mayoral Forum

A strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life, for all.

14 August 2026

simplifyinglocalgovernment@mcert.govt.nz

Waitaha Canterbury Head Start proposals

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) recognises the critical role that local government has in enabling strong, healthy and prosperous communities, and a healthy environment.

We promote local government leadership, provide a platform for region-wide coordination and decision-making, while advocating for Canterbury's diverse communities.

Governance and decision-making are strongest when they are close to affected communities. Waitaha Canterbury councils have embraced the Head Start process and, while under considerable pressures, made decisions that are best for them and the communities they serve. Our collective view is that any enduring reform needs to have true community support.

While councils have endeavoured to work through as much detail as possible at the local level, the Mayoral Forum has ensured this work was anchored by a whole-of-region discussion to promote a consistent approach to the Head Start process.

While the proposals and decisions made vary across the region, when considered overall they meet the Government's objective in significantly reducing the number of local government organisations and providing a pathway for local delivery of functions currently managed by Canterbury Regional Council.

The following summarises the position of Canterbury and assumes that each proposal will take on regional functions:

- Kaikōura District Council propose to join with Marlborough District Council (an existing unitary Council)
- Hurunui District Council propose to join with Waimakariri District Council to create a new North Canterbury Council
- Waimakariri District Council propose to join with Hurunui District Council to create a new North Canterbury Council

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

Secretariat, E: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz W: www.canterburymayors.org.nz
C/- Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140 T: 03 345 9323

Ashburton District Council • Canterbury Regional Council • Christchurch City Council • Hurunui District Council
Kaikōura District Council • Mackenzie District Council • Selwyn District Council • Timaru District Council
Waimakariri District Council • Waimate District Council • Waitaki District Council

- Christchurch City Council propose to retain current boundaries as a stand-alone unitary council
- Selwyn District Council propose to retain current boundaries as a stand-alone unitary council
- Ashburton District Council did not submit a Head Start proposal
- Timaru, Mackenzie, and Waitaki District Councils propose to join with Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, and Waitaki district councils to create a new South Canterbury Council
- Waimate District Council propose to join with Timaru, Mackenzie and Waitaki district councils

Waitaha Canterbury is a large, diverse and complex region comprised of distinct communities, economies, and geographies. Canterbury's councils have a long history of working together on matters of regional significance and our intention is that this spirit will continue.

The Mayoral Forum acknowledges that further action from central Government is required to address long-standing economic, environmental, and funding challenges. Amalgamation alone won't solve the funding challenges we have submitted on previously.

We would note that the scale and pace of change across the reform programme requires careful management.

Several current regional council functions are key to protecting life and property (Civil Defence and Emergency Management, river management and flood protection), the environment (freshwater, air quality, biodiversity, coastal), and economic productivity (public transport, biosecurity). It is critical that continuity of these services continue during transition.

Significant investment from central government, communities and councils is needed to transition to new authorities, and the transition will not be without risk.

To successfully deliver new unitary authorities for our communities and New Zealand, a strong partnership with appropriate funding support and two-way trust between central and local government will be required.

Engagement with Ngāi Tahu

Councils have engaged individually and collectively with mana whenua as part of developing proposals, this engagement should continue through detailed design and transition.

On behalf of Waitaha Papatipu Rūnanga, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu has stated its strong support for all regions within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā submitting a compliant Head Start proposal.

Planning system

The Mayoral Forum is cognisant of the challenges ahead for delivering on the new planning system and conscious of the complexity of delivering parallel transitions. We agree that the transition to the new governance arrangements should not impact on the ability to deliver on the new planning system – but we are certainly conscious of the risk.

The Mayoral Forum is in the process of establishing the Regional Spatial Plan Committee and structures to support the new planning system for delivery of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan as required by the new system.

Who we are

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum comprises the mayors of the 10 territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council, supported by our Chief Executives. The purpose of the Mayoral Forum is to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.

All Canterbury councils actively participate in the Forum: the Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council, and the Canterbury Regional Council.

The Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury covers regional areas of interest and/or concern. The proposed structures support continued progress across these shared commitments, along with continued collaboration regardless of what shape the region takes in the near future.

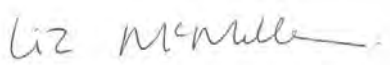
Nāku iti, noa, nā



Nigel Bowen
Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Mayor Timaru District Council



Marie Black
Deputy Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Mayor Hurunui District Council



Liz McMillan
Mayor Ashburton District Council



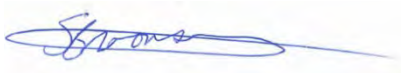
Dr Deon Swiggs
Chair Canterbury Regional Council



Phil Mauger
Mayor Christchurch City Council



Craig Mackle
Mayor Kaikōura District Council

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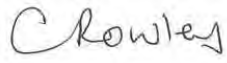
Scott Aronsen
Mayor Mackenzie District Council

A blue ink signature of Lydia Gliddon, written in a cursive style.

Lydia Gliddon
Mayor Selwyn District Council

A blue ink signature of Dan Gordon, featuring a stylized 'D' and 'G'.

Dan Gordon
Mayor Waimakariri District Council

A blue ink signature of Craig Rowley, written in a cursive style.

Craig Rowley
Mayor Waimate District Council

A blue ink signature of Melanie Tavendale, written in a cursive style.

Melanie Tavendale
Mayor Waitaki District Council

Attachment 3 – MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 May 2026

Canterbury Mayoral Forum agrees to regional approach on local government reform

The Mayoral Forum and Secretariat are supported by the Regional Council but remains a separate entity.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is recommending its member councils explore a regional approach to developing a Head Start proposal for the Simplifying Local Government reforms, with individual councils working through the detail of what that looks like for their communities.

The Mayors of the region's 10 territorial authorities, the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council, and the Kaiwhakahaere of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu met on Friday 29 May 2026, supported by their deputies and Chief Executives.

The main focus of the meeting was the Government's final decisions on the Simplifying Local Government proposal. After a robust discussion around the table, the Mayoral Forum agreed to support a Canterbury Head Start pathway for the region, noting that this will provide for more than one proposed unitary authority.

Timaru Mayor and Mayoral Forum Chair Nigel Bowen said it was the role of the territorial authorities to signal to central government what the best path forward looked like for Waitaha Canterbury.

"Each of us wants to make sure our communities' best interests are represented, so we are taking the discussions had here today back to our individual Councils, where we will work through the details. We are asking each Council to take into consideration the discussions we have had that will help frame what our region looks like in the future.

"We are part of a large and complex region, and this is a once-in-a-generation process we all want to get right. Details of how we will coordinate a regional approach will be confirmed in the coming weeks."

Mayor Bowen acknowledged Environment Canterbury's proactive engagement with the local government changes, noting the Regional Council had taken steps to ensure each council understood how its services could best support the future structure of local government across the region.

Forum advances key regional work Also at the meeting, the Mayoral Forum agreed to establish the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee. The committee will work collaboratively to develop a long-term Regional Spatial Plan, as required by upcoming national planning legislation, with the plan to be completed by

mid-2027. The Forum discussed governance, funding, and resourcing arrangements for the process.

The Forum also approved the final draft of the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-28, and its World-stage ready document, which is a precursor to a potential Regional Deal.

In addition, the Mayoral Forum discussed its commitment to establishing local leadership groups across the region. They agreed to request a report to understand how the Canterbury Water Management Strategy fits within the context of the Simplifying Local Government and Resource Management reforms for discussion at their August meeting.

Sign up to receive Mayoral Forum updates.

ENDS

For more information, contact the Environment Canterbury media team on media@ecan.govt.nz

Attachment 4 - Activities and Engagements - Responses to media enquiry

15 June 2026 - The Press re regional deals

Request

Why is Canterbury still at the scoping stage 18 months after lodging its expression of interest?

Is it a missed opportunity that Canterbury is unlikely to have an investment-ready proposal before the election?

Is the lack of a dedicated budget slowing the work?

The first phase is expected to take six months and only produce a stocktake, initial investment narrative and list of evidence gaps. Why has that work not already been done?

What does Canterbury risk by not having a signed deal when Auckland and Western Bay of Plenty already have one?

Response

Please attribute to Canterbury Mayoral Forum Chair and Timaru District Mayor Nigel Bowen:

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum has chosen to work within current resources to progress the development of a Regional Deal.

Along with working on a potential Regional Deal proposal, we are also working on our BAU, plus Simplifying Local Government and Resource Management reforms, noting that we are working across 11 councils as we do this work.

Of the 18 Regional Deal proposals first submitted, only three have progressed to MOUs. It is not expected that the Government will progress additional deal proposals in the current term.

Some of the work has already been done, for instance, our World-stage Ready document. However, as we are not proposing to submit a proposal to government in this term, we are being realistic with the resources that we have.

Our analysis of the Auckland and Western Bay of Plenty deals do not lead us to the view that there is a risk to Canterbury for not having a signed deal at this time.