

Pākowhai Q&As

Some people in the community haven't been contacted yet, so how has feedback and information been gathered?

To date, information has been sourced from directly affected landowners in one-on-one meetings, previous affected landowner meetings, and enquiries through to the recovery and the projects team. Properties that sit outside Category 2C have only recently begun being contacted, as the priority has been affected property owners. Flood mitigation options have been developed by technical experts and engineers.

We are continuing our engagement with the community and look forward to hearing from more of the community as we further develop the solution.

Where did the water come from during Cyclone Gabrielle?

The flooding in Pākowhai during Cyclone Gabrielle came from multiple sources. Overtopping and eventual breaches of the stopbanks on the Tutaekuri River at Moteo and Ōmaranui and from overtopping and breaches of stopbanks on the the Ngaruroro River at Omāhu, all contributed.

Will a stopbank and/or drainage solution protect against another Cyclone Gabrielle-level event?

The proposed stopbanks are designed for a one-in-100-year flood event for the Tutaekuri-Waimate stream with some ability to manage limited overland flow from an over-design event for the Tutaekuri and Ngaruroro. So, while it will provide increased flood resilience, it would not provide full protection from an event the size and scale of Cyclone Gabrielle. Cyclone Gabrielle was a one-in-1000-year event in the Tutaekuri and more than a one-in-700-year event in the Ngaruroro, resulting in significant overland flows from overtopping and breaches of stop banks.

What will happen to the people on the opposite side of the stopbank?

Once the design of the proposed solution is confirmed we can then consider any secondary effects to neighboring properties resulting from the proposed stopbank and investigate options to reduce negative impacts. This could include improved drainage or additional earth bunds and other measures.

With this proposed concept, will properties in Category 1 and/or 3 remain there?

The proposed concept is focused on moving Category 2C properties to Category 1. There will be no category change to those properties that have been classified as either Category 1 or Category 3. The modelling and surveying works are a key part of investigating the full resilience the solution will provide to all properties in the wider area.

When will construction begin?

We are working toward a start date in October/November 2025. However, there are a lot of factors that need to be assessed and steps we need to go through before we can begin, which may impact this date, including securing permanent land access and surveying works.

If HBRC needs access to our land to build a stopbank, will those landowners be compensated?

If HBRC purchases the land, there will be compensation. The calculation for compensation involves several factors. All these form part of the negotiation and will be different for each property hence an agreement or proposal can't be provided until the scope and extent of the required access is known.

How will this solution affect properties?

Any impact of the solution on individual properties will be discussed in one-on-one conversations with the landowners.

Is this draft plan going to change much, or is this basically the final plan that may need some tweaks?

We believe this is the best concept. It may change depending on the results of site investigations and conversations with landowners, but the basic concept will remain the same.

How is the work to be undertaken in Pākowhai funded?

Central government is contributing 75% of the funding, with HBRC contributing 25% which is rated across the Heretaunga Flood Control Scheme.

Who is the ultimate decision maker?

While the final decision sits with Regional Council Chief Executive, Dr Nic Peet, HBRC wants to build a relationship with the community, hear your feedback, and work towards a solution for Pākowhai that has community support.

What about the Chesterhope or Brookfield bridges?

Hastings District Council is the Territorial Authority that looks after the bridges and stormwater so please direct any queries to them.

Are the rivers being cleared?

Yes, we have a gravel extraction plan that is part of the Heretaunga Plains Flood Control Scheme. Gravel extraction is one piece that can help to increase river capacity and reduce some flood risks, but it will not stop the flooding of rivers during extreme weather events.

Is there any impact from the other flood resilience projects in Hawke's Bay on Pākowhai?

The Regional Council is working on six flood resilience projects, including nearby Waiohiki. While we have different project managers working on these, we make up one large team and will be also considering the projects together — how they may affect and/or complement each other.