

Reducing flood risk in Hawke's Bay



Big decisions ahead for all of us

We live in a flood prone region

We live in one of the most beautiful and bountiful regions of Aotearoa New Zealand. But the same things that make Hawke's Bay a great place to live, work and play – our hills, rivers, fertile plains, and our coastline – make it prone to flood risk.

Flooding can be river, surface or coastal. All three can happen at the same time, as we experienced in Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023 with devastating impacts.

With climate change, the intensity and frequency of severe weather events will increase, and we know the levels of protection that we've had in the past won't be enough in the future.

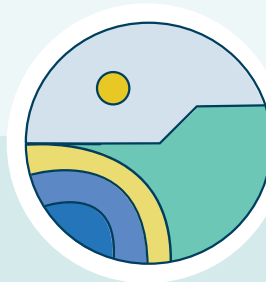
This means there are choices we all need to make – protect, avoid, retreat, accommodate – and these will affect everyone, including our children and grandchildren and their children.

“ Flooding is one of the biggest climate challenges we face here in Hawke's Bay. ”



Protect

Staying in place and building defences, eg. stopbanks and seawalls



Avoid

Staying away from areas where the risk is too high, eg. restricting or preventing development and making changes to existing land use



Retreat

Purposely moving away from areas where the risk is too high eg. red zoning, Category 3 areas, placing restrictions on land use and relocating community assets



Accommodate

Staying in place and making changes to building and infrastructure, to improve resilience



Protecting through engineering solutions

Between now and our 2027 Long Term Plan, we want to have a conversation with our community about the engineering solutions we could invest in to further reduce flood risk. This means the built features like spillways, drains and seawalls that work together to help defend against flooding.

These engineering solutions buy us time against increasing flood risks, but longer term, retreat may be the only option in some areas where assets like these are no longer cost-effective.

Examples of flood infrastructure assets



Rivers

stopbanks, spillways, floodwalls, floodgates



Surface

drains, culverts, detention dams, pumps



Coastal

groynes, seawalls, revetments, beach renourishment

These sorts of infrastructure assets are usually funded by ratepayers who benefit (directly and indirectly) and contribute to the need for such schemes.

The infrastructure we already have across Hawke's Bay is valued at \$450m. By 2027, there will be another \$200m of flood protection assets built to keep communities in place following Cyclone Gabrielle. The ongoing cost to operate and maintain these assets is a big cost to ratepayers.

We know there is a lot more we could do to reduce flooding risk across Hawke's Bay. But these things don't come cheap.

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Deciding what to do, where, when and who should pay are big difficult decisions that needs everyone to get involved in. ”

We need your help to make the right choices.





How much will reducing flood risk cost?



Each area within Hawke's Bay has different flood risks and different options to reduce those risks now and over time. Deciding how much additional flood protection we want beyond what we already have will, in the end, come down to how much we are all prepared to pay.

To make it more affordable and make sure at Regional Council we're able to deliver the additional protection, we need to spread the work over 20 plus years. Budgeting and delivering this work is a long-term challenge. There is no quick fix.

Estimating how this work will affect Regional Council rates is equally challenging. The rating impact depends on how much we forecast to spend each year, how many ratepayers the cost can be spread across, how much we can borrow and the interest rate, how much central government will contribute, having the skilled people to deliver the work, and most importantly, how much ratepayers can afford.

To give you an idea of the size of the challenge, if all known engineering solutions were delivered today, they would roughly cost \$600m. If there was no central government contribution, the principal loan and interest repayments were spread over 20 years at a 5% interest rate with maintenance at 1% of capital, the Regional Council would need to double the rates it collects from \$50m to \$100m.

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Under this scenario you would pay roughly double the rates you pay now.

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Deciding the most affordable options

If we want to reduce river, surface and coastal flood risk, deciding which extra engineering solutions to invest in, alongside other nature-based solutions, is the job that needs to be done between now and the next Long Term Plan in June 2027.

The big gnarly questions - what, where, when and who should pay - need to be worked through in detail, with the people and communities most affected, and then with all regional ratepayers.

As the Regional Council we don't have all the answers and communities need to be involved in deciding.

We know that engineering solutions like stopbanks and seawalls can make things safer, but they do not make it 100% safe. There will always be residual risk. Everyone has a role to play to understand that risk and make decisions in that knowledge.

There is a lot of work to do between now and mid 2027 to give our community real choices that balance reducing flood risk with affordability.

As these proposals are developed you can find out more by visiting hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#engagementhub](https://twitter.com/engagementhub)



HAWKES BAY

REGIONAL COUNCIL

TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI