



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE – 9 February 2022

O’Conor Home stopbank works and update on Westport flood protection

Temporary works to the stopbank behind O’Conor Home were completed during the weather event experienced last week. These works were undertaken during the State of Emergency.

There is no clear owner of the stopbank behind O’Conor Home which has presented issues in how to fund such works. While the matter of ownership is resolved, the Regional Council progressed with scoping the works to that would be required in last year as well as approached NEMA for emergency works funding in December 2021 to cover the matter of the cost of works in the interim.

The application is being assessed as to whether it meets the NEMA funding criteria or not. Council was working through this prior to the weather event that occurred on 3 February 2022 as this stopbank will become part of the overall flood protection project for Westport.

The temporary works completed last week followed the advice provided by Land, River, Sea Consulting Draft Report, which is to be presented to Council at their next meeting. While work of this nature generally requires a resource consent, due to the state of emergency declared Council undertook the temporary works immediately.

“Land, River, Sea Consulting provided significant insight into the flooding that was forecast, and using that modelling, Buller District Council were able to advise on additional temporary works or top-ups to where flooding occurred in July,” Director of Operations Randal Beal said. “We would like to thank Chris Coll and the contractors who were able to respond so quickly and undertake the emergency work required.”

Council will be contacting members of the Westport 2100 Working Group this week to seek expressions of interest from representatives interested in taking up roles on the Westport Joint Committee. An independent chair for the Joint Committee is also to be appointed. Council will be seeking nominations for this role from the Westport community.

A meeting of the Westport Joint Committee will be held as soon as final appointments are confirmed, likely late February or early March.

Council has also been provided support from Henley-Hutchings to assist with securing additional Central Government funding.

Heather Mabin, Chief Executive of the Regional Council said that while action cannot be seen on the ground, work is progressing with this project.

“The first year of the flood protection project was always going to focus on the survey and design work, including a flood modelling review to ensure that the protection scheme meets the recommended level of service consulted on.”

“We have advanced this work as much as possible, even though we started 3 months late with the Long-term Plan not being adopted until 5 October 2021.”

A peer review of the flood modelling has just been completed with the report to go to the Westport Joint Committee at its first meeting, and Council, shortly. Staff recommendations on work that can be started immediately will also be presented to these meetings.

ENDS

Media contacts

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