



# THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

**MEDIA RELEASE – 26 January 2022**

## **Orowaiti cut would be ineffective for current weather event**

Engineering advice has ruled out the use of the Orowaiti cut for the current weather event.

There have been suggestions that constructing the cut, either prior to this event, or over the next day or so, would alleviate potential flooding.

West Coast Regional Council Director of Operations, Randal Beal, said that while the cut would provide benefit to some flood risk scenarios it would not give the relief sought in this situation.

“The current forecast of northerlies and extreme high tides would likely lead to additional issues for the community. The cut would cause further coastal inundation.”

“Due to the lack of ground height between the Orowaiti and the sea, the cut has to be shallow and very wide in order to provide any flood relief benefit, in the right scenarios. It also requires approximately one million cubic metres of material to be moved. The cut is not likely to significantly self-flush due to lack of river velocity and the distance of well over a kilometre involved.”

“We understand that this is a stressful time for our Westport community and are looking at all options which can be deployed now,” said Mr Beal. “Using the flood modelling undertaken, we have been able to recommend priority areas for sand-bagging to be done today.”

The Buller District Council has coordinated supplies for sandbags. These can be accessed at the Pulse Recreation Centre car park, by the netball courts, and at the Kawatiri Coastal Trail by the Buller Bridge.

The purpose of the Orowaiti cut is to complement any flood protection structures. It is one of the additional flood protection tools that is being considered by the Westport Steering Committee for inclusion as part of an application for Central Government funding.

Mr Beal said that the Orowaiti Cut presented its own issues.

“We want to reassure the community, that if doing the cut would provide flood relief for the event we are facing then we would be acting.”

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