



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

Media release

1 September 2023

Council to receive \$1 million reimbursement for Westport flood protection works

Reimbursement of \$1 million for emergency flood protection works constructed to protect Westport has been confirmed for the West Coast Regional Council.

Peter Haddock, West Coast Regional Council Chair said that Council had been negotiating hard on behalf of the community to obtain these funds.

“I’m really pleased that Council has been successful in securing this funding and would like to thank the Government for their contribution.”

During the flood event of July 2021, a 260m length of bank erosion formed on the true right bank of the Buller River upstream of the O’Conor Home (a rest home and residential care facility) and an erosion scour occurred to a section of historic rock training wall adjacent to Organ’s Island. Information presented to Council indicated that if not acted upon, they could place Westport at risk, ahead of the more comprehensive flood protection planned for construction.

At the time Council agreed to undertake this work there was no guarantee that any co-investment funding could be obtained. However, an application for these funds was made in the Kawatiri Business Case submitted on 30 June 2022.

To fund these urgent works, Council decided to liquidate its Catastrophe Fund and increase debt funded by the Local Government Funding Authority. The cost of the two pieces of work was \$2.42m. In Budget 2023, the Government set aside \$22.9 million to increase Westport’s flood resilience in response to the co-investment proposal and the Government’s evaluation of the proposal. A contribution of \$1 million was approved to assist with restoring Council’s funds to pre-flooding levels.

Council has been working with DIA staff over the past couple of months to secure the \$1 million contribution to restore the Catastrophe Fund and to pay down debt incurred by undertaking these two projects.

“There was no certainty Council would receive any funds when it made the decision to protect Westport with these works, it was just the right thing to do,” said Chair Haddock. “Council’s Catastrophe fund is an important part of our community resilience response, and I would like to acknowledge the funding received to top this up once more ready to assist other communities if needed.”

ENDS

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