Resilient River Communities | Te Uru Kahika Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa | Kānoa Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit | Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti GISBORNE DISTRICT COUNCIL

FLOOD PROTECTION ACROSS ALL OF GISBORNE

GISBORNE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Project: Waipaoa River Flood Control Upgrade **Location:** Waipaoa River, Gisborne

The challenge

Climate change is the most significant long-term issue facing the Gisborne region. In 2020 the government declared a climate change emergency, recognising the need for preparation for the impacts of a warming climate with more erosion, more flash floods and wildfires likely in the Gisborne region. Impacts include expecting sea level rise, coastal erosion and floods affecting homes and recreation.

Flood protection keeps Gisborne's people and community safe from its rivers breaking their banks in heavy rains and ensures that its important horticulture, viticulture and farming assets are protected from the effects of climate change.

Project summary

- Long term climate change resilience programme.
- Approx 64km of stopbanks being widened and heightened along the Waipaoa River.
- Work began in 2019 and is scheduled for completion in 2030/31.
- Some 10,000ha of fertile floodplain land and Gisborne City will be protected by this mahi.
- The Waipaoa Flood Control Scheme is deemed one of the council's most valuable assets.

The programme

Completed work

- **February 2019 to March 2023:** 24.5km stopbank upgrades completed on the Eastern Side of the Waipaoa River.
- **October 2022 to February 2023** 8.4km of stopbank upgrades completed between Opou Road and the Waipaoa River mouth on the Western Side of the Waipaoa River.
- Flood mitigation works involving a 900m long ring-bank and a 450m long deflection bund on Wi Pere Trust were completed by December 2022. An emergency spillway was also largely completed by February 2023.

Current and future work

- **April - June 2023:** Complete remaining stopbank upgrades on the Eastern Side stopbanks between Whitmore Road and Caesar Road (approx. 1km).
- **October/November 2023:** Complete remaining sections of stopbank upgrades at the Waipaoa River mouth downstream of railway bridge, and near the Whatatuna Stream (western side).
- **October 2023 - June 2024:** Upgrade between Matawhero (SH2) Bridge and the Whakaahu Stream (western side).
- **October 2024 onwards:** Progressively upgrade the Western Side stopbanks from the Whakaahu Stream working upstream until complete.
- **2030/31:** Waipaoa Flood Control Scheme fully upgraded and operational on both sides.

Project funding 2020-2023

Kānoa $7.5m | GDC $6m | Total $13.5m

Planning, investigation and design is also continuing for future stopbank upgrade areas, all of which are located on the western side of the Waipaoa River.

Funding provided by Kānoa helped to accelerate this programme of work.

Total project likely cost 2019 - 2030/31: $32-35 million.

Key Benefits

- ✓ **Local employment boosted:** two local contractors have combined, employed 12 new staff as a direct result of this project.
- ✓ **Climate change adaptation:** increasing the level of flood protection to the Poverty Bay floodplains and Gisborne City to a 100-year return period accounting for climate changes out to the year 2090.
- ✓ **Protection:** for housing, businesses, local and state highway roads, airport, hospital, horticulture, viticulture and farming assets.
- ✓ **Safeguarding:** economic development and wellbeing.
- ✓ **Contributing to community infrastructure:** 8km long cycle trail along Waipaoa River mouth to Matawhero SH2 Bridge. Cattle stop ramps, signage and squeeze gates installed.
- ✓ **Care for the environment:** borrow sites for stopbank fill have the least environmental impact on river ecology, fish passage and spawning. Cultural and archaeological discovery protocols in place.
- ✓ **Money flowing back into the local economy:** to businesses engaged for maintenance and mechanical work, steel work, engineering, tyres, right down to the helicopter company laying grass seed.
- ✓ **Enabling affordability:** many communities cannot absorb increased cost of rates to pay for new or upgraded flood protection schemes. Contribution by central government has enabled increased resilience to climate change and protection against flooding.