



**Resilient River  
Communities**

Built By



**Te Uru  
Kahika**

Regional and  
Unitary Councils  
Aotearoa



**Kānoa**  
Regional Economic Development  
& Investment Unit

## Quarterly Update June 2025

### Nau mai and welcome

We are pleased to share the latest news in flood resilience with you. The sector is working hard delivering the Tranche 1 projects approved by government for co-investment to improve flood resilience across New Zealand. We are currently gathering the necessary information to provide you with an overall summary of progress. We are also working toward getting Tranche 2 approved so work can commence in the coming construction season.

### Progress on individual projects

The **Otiria-Moerewa project in Northland** has received high accolades at the Floodplain Management Australia (FMA) Conference, receiving a high commendation at the awards event in April.

Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council marked a significant milestone with the **completion of the Rangitāiki Floodway and Spillway project** recently, and Greater Wellington hosted Regional Development Minister, Shane Jones, at Fullers Bend near Greytown in May to mark the **completion of five Wairarapa flood resilience projects**.

River Manager's SIG co-convenor and Greater Wellington's Flood & Resistance Strategic Advisor, **Graeme Campbell, has been admitted to the class of Fellow of Engineering NZ** - one of Engineering New Zealand's highest membership classes reserved for the profession's highest achievers. As former manager of Greater Wellington's Flood Protection Department for 18 years, Graeme made significant contributions to engineering, particularly in flood risk management, governance, organisational management, and technical expertise. His experience developing rigorous flood risk management processes has garnered national and international recognition, establishing him as a leader in the field.

Greater Wellington Chair, **Daran Ponter has been appointed Chair of New Zealand's LGNZ Regional Sector Group (RSG)**, succeeding Bay of Plenty Regional Council Chair Doug Leeder. Daran is an

experienced Regional Government Chair seeking a productive partnership with central government with a long-standing interest in local government and has been actively involved with Greater Wellington's **Climate Resilience programme**.

Good progress is being made in developing a project plan to deliver a **National Flood risk investment prioritisation tool**. This task is part of the River Managers' SIG 10-year Plan 2024 – 2033. The tool will record the national flood risk, existing measures in place to manage that risk, proposed measures to reduce unmanaged risk, along with associated benefit-cost ratios (BCR). From this the sector and government will be able to prioritise their future investments in flood risk management.

### Tranche 1 projects live on Resilient River Communities website

We have been working behind the scenes to get the 44 projects, co-funded through Kānoa's Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF), showcased on the Resilient River Communities website. These projects can be viewed on a great interactive map, alongside previous projects co-funded through Kānoa's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.

**Check out the lineup of new projects online**



### Otiria-Moerewa project receives high commendation at Australasian Awards

Northland Regional Council

Northland Regional Council received a Highly Commended award at the Floodplain Management Australia Excellence Awards for their Otiria-Moerewa Flood Mitigation project.

Using a “pre-human” flood model to restore natural water pathways, NRC integrated Mātauranga Māori into LiDAR mapping and hydraulic modelling to create a holistic floodplain restoration strategy. The approach reduces long-term maintenance expenses whilst achieving a 75% reduction in flood severity.

Congratulations to the rivers team at Northland Regional Council (NRC), landowners, mana whenua Ngāti Kopaki-Ngāti Te Ara Hapu, who received a Highly Commended award at the Floodplain Management Australia Excellence Awards on 15th May for their Otiria-Moerewa Flood Mitigation Te Mana o Te Wai project. The award was presented in front of around 500 people and faced tough competition for the FMA IAG Flood Risk Management Project of the Year Award.

This project was shortlisted against three other large Australian projects and showcased wide-ranging benefits of the collaborative, community-led flood protection initiative, guided by local hapū and the partnership of three Māori land blocks.

Through NRC’s innovative 'pre-human' flood model, NRC identified how roads and railways were impacting flood flow. The new spillway and bridge restore natural water pathways, integrating Mātauranga Māori into LiDAR mapping and hydraulic modelling to create a holistic floodplain restoration strategy. The utilisation

of natural flood management approaches, rather than infrastructure-heavy solutions, will also reduce long-term maintenance expenses.

This project is more than flood protection for Northland—it’s whenua preservation, environmental restoration, and a true partnership between iwi, councils, and engineering experts.

The bridge above was part of the old Pokapu Road Bridge 3 of the 5 beams from the old 18-metre wide Pokapu Road Bridge were re-cycled. The other 2 were used for a farm bridge. The team were looking for innovative ways to reduce waste and give back to the community. The [Quarry Gardens](#) is a subtropical oasis created by volunteers in the remnants of a former quarry. It is a tranquil place to enjoy for a family picnic.







## Spillway opening marks completion of major capital works for the Rangitāiki River

Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council

**A key piece of Eastern Bay of Plenty flood protection infrastructure has been officially opened, showing how innovation, collaboration and technology can come together for the benefit of the community**

On Saturday, 10 May, Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Ngāti Awa representatives and Associate Regional Development Minister, Hon. Mark Patterson gathered with local community members to officially open the Rangitāiki Floodway and Spillway. A key piece of Eastern Bay of Plenty flood protection infrastructure has been officially opened, showing how innovation, collaboration and technology can come together for the benefit of the community. On Saturday, 10 May, Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Ngāti Awa representatives and Associate Regional Development Minister, Hon. Mark Patterson gathered with local community members to officially open the Rangitāiki Floodway and Spillway.

The event marked the completion of the \$50m project, which has been engineered to take pressure off the flood prone Rangitāiki River by diverting some of its flow into the floodway during significant weather events.

The project demonstrates the importance of listening to and working with ratepayers to develop and fund key infrastructure, particularly in an environment where the impact of climate change is increasingly 'front and centre' in decisions underpinning long term community resilience. The success of the project is

credited to the combined effort of the community, Ngāti Awa, the Regional Council, Whakatāne and Kawerau District Councils, and Central Government.

The project significantly strengthens the region's infrastructure. As one of the biggest flood resilience efforts completed in New Zealand in recent years, it will deliver vital protection for local communities and unlock economic potential across the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

The project was undertaken using an integrated approach by Regional Council's engineering, assets and operations teams, as well as implementing best practise approaches and exploring innovation when it came to engineering designs. The Spillway upgrade is a great example of what happens when you combine robust data and modelling with innovative engineering and community input.

Now complete, the Rangitāiki Floodway and Spillway assets form part of a network of flood defences along the Rangitāiki River. This includes the recent upgrades to Rangitāiki River Floodwalls and Lower Rangitāiki Stopbanks at the river mouth near Thornton.



**Resilient River  
Communities**

Built By



Regional and  
Unitary Councils  
Aotearoa



**Kānoa**  
Regional Economic Development  
& Investment Unit

Resilient River Communities – June 2025



## Minister Shane Jones welcomes the completion of five Wairarapa projects

### Greater Wellington Regional Council

The completion of works across five sites in Wairarapa as part of Greater Wellington's Flood Resilience Programme was celebrated in May with a visit to Fullers Bend near Greytown by Regional Development Minister Shane Jones who marked the occasion with Greater Wellington chair Daran Ponter, South Wairarapa mayor Martin Connelly, mana whenua, lead contractor Mills Albert, Councillors Adrienne Staples and Aaron Woodcock, and key people from the community.

The total programme, spanning 16 sites, provides increased resilience for the protection of cultural taonga as well as local homes, schools, hospitals, businesses, farms, local roads and the State Highway.

Greater Wellington chair Daran Ponter welcomed Regional Development Minister Shane Jones, South Wairarapa mayor Martin Connelly, and mana whenua to the Waiōhine River site known as Fullers Bend in an event which marked the completion of five Wairarapa flood resilience projects, in May.

The five flood protection projects are among 16 in the regional council's Flood Resilience Programme, and 42 nationwide that received government co-funding of \$101million in Budget 2024.

The site visit was facilitated by lead contractor Mills Albert, a Māori-owned business with experience building rock walls and groynes in rivers across the region for Greater Wellington climate resilience initiatives.

The native planting plan at Fullers Bend, and all projects in the programme, were designed with local hapū, iwi and landowners, generating employment opportunities for local whānau.

Boosting the Wairarapa economy and sustaining its growth are key programme objectives, alongside protecting cultural taonga, homes, schools, hospitals, businesses, farms, local roads and the State Highway from flooding.

Greater Wellington Wairarapa councillor Adrienne Staples also commended the projects, including the jobs that are being created to reduce the risk of flooding for public and private assets through collective leadership safeguarding families and lifeline utilities.

In collaboration with Kānoa (the Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit), Greater Wellington is applying lessons learned from cyclones Gabrielle and Hale to build regional populations resilient to extreme weather events.



**Resilient River  
Communities**

Built By



Regional and  
Unitary Councils  
Aotearoa



**Kānoa**  
Regional Economic Development  
& Investment Unit

Resilient River Communities – June 2025





## Field trip explores Cyclone Gabrielle recovery challenges

30 people gathered for the Tairāwhiti Rivers Recovery Field Trip in February to explore the ongoing recovery of the region's rivers and infrastructure in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle. The two-day programme explored the challenges of infrastructure damages as well as resilience, flood risk management, habitat protection and community engagement.

The Tairāwhiti Rivers Recovery Field Trip, held on 26-27 February 2025, was a two-day gathering that brought together experts from around the country, community leaders, and locals to explore the ongoing recovery of the region's rivers and infrastructure in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle.

Key topics on day one included the challenges of maintaining drinking water supply amidst weather impacts, the protection of inanga spawning habitats, and the damage to infrastructure like the East Coast State Highway due to flooding and subsequent erosion. Presentations also highlighted the resilience of lifelines from a whanau and hapū perspective. Attendees visited Hikuwai Bridge and Mangahauini Gorge to observe firsthand the flood-affected areas and the measures in place for recovery.

Day two of the field trip focused on resilience and explored the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle on dwellings

and the innovative response to managing woody debris scattered across the region. Discussions also covered post-flood resilience recommendations and flood risk modelling for Tairāwhiti, including hydraulic modelling as well as predictive and geomorphically integrated approaches to better understand sediment movement and flood behaviours. The group also explored the history of Tairāwhiti at Puhi Kai Iti / Cook Landing site as well as visiting the Waituhi stopbank, Te Karaka Township - including the soon to be relocated Rangatira Marae, and the Mahunga floodgates.

The trip provided a comprehensive view of the region's recovery, from infrastructure repair to flood modelling, highlighting the collaboration between local iwi, councils, and experts to build resilience for future events.



**Resilient River  
Communities**

Built By



Regional and  
Unitary Councils  
Aotearoa



**Kānoa**  
Regional Economic Development  
& Investment Unit

Resilient River Communities — June 2025





**Resilient River  
Communities**

*Built By*



**Te Uru  
Kahika**

Regional and  
Unitary Councils  
Aotearoa



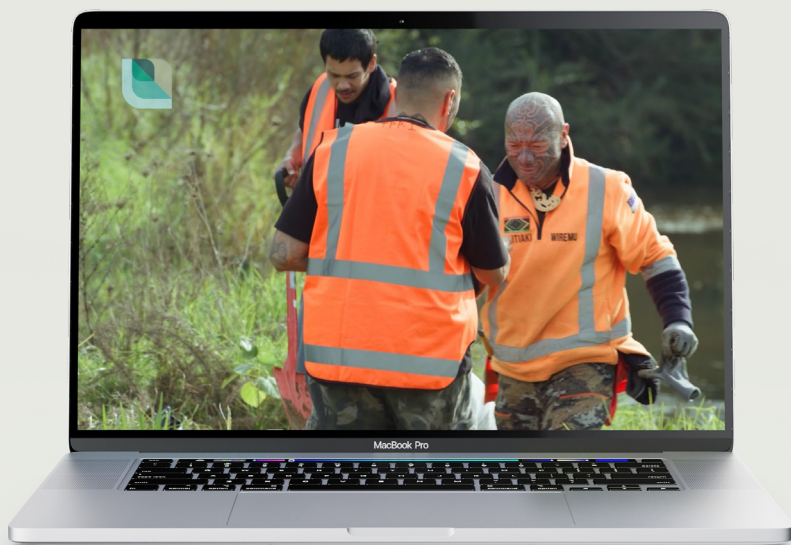
**Kānoa**  
Regional Economic Development  
& Investment Unit

## About Resilient River Communities

In 2020, Kānoa released \$217m to co-fund 55 climate resilience projects, with a total cost of \$312m, they are collectively known as the Resilient River Communities projects. Resilient River Communities is a joint initiative between Kānoa - the Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit, regional councils and local

authorities focused on developing and upgrading vital river management and flood protection schemes in Aotearoa.

More information about these projects can be found online at [www.resilientrivers.nz](http://www.resilientrivers.nz)



## Resilient River Communities

### Video

This short clip looks at the projects that are taking place around Aotearoa, why the Resilient River Communities programme was established and the people who are passionate about its success. Hear more about the effects of flooding on communities, as well as insurance implications and social outcomes from those directly impacted around New Zealand.

**Watch the clip here.**



## Spread the word

If you know someone who would like to be in the loop on the latest Resilient River Communities news, please forward this email to them so that they can subscribe using the button [here](#).