Te Uru Kahika
Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa

Ko Tātou LGNZ.

5 August 2026

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon

Leader of the National Party

christopher.luxon@national.org.nz

Dear Christopher,

Caucus briefing follow up – Before the Deluge flood protection

Thank you for your time discussing the importance of flood resilience infrastructure – namely the 'Before the Deluge' programme – on 1 July in National's caucus room.

Communities across New Zealand are confronting more frequent and intense flooding. Flooding threatens homes, livelihoods, businesses and critical infrastructure. Every time communities are forced to rebuild roads, bridges and public assets, economic activity is disrupted and growth is held back. While we have started building flood resilience, overall coverage is sparse due to historical underinvestment. Many New Zealanders' communities and livelihoods remain exposed to flooding risks. Investing in flood resilience protects communities, vital infrastructure and provides businesses the confidence to invest and grow in our regions.

New Zealanders say this really matters – they want leadership to protect their physical and economic security. 92% of respondents in a 2024 Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet survey saw severe weather and flooding as a real threat in the next year. A 2026 Freshwater Strategy poll found 74% of respondents supported large-scale flood protection.

The economic case for investment is strong. These projects have a benefit-cost ratio of more than 5:1. That's substantially higher than many infrastructure investments. At a time when Government is focused on value for money, investing more in resilience, and spending less on recovery, is essential to reducing the cost burden on taxpayers.

LGNZ and Te Uru Kahika are calling for a long-term co-investment partnership between central and local government. Current funding occurs on a project-by-project basis, slowing delivery and leaving too many New Zealanders vulnerable. A sustained pipeline of investment would provide the certainty to get on and build the protection desperately required to secure New Zealand's long-term economic prospects.

Before the Deluge is a proven co-investment model, delivering real protection to communities since 2021, with investment split on a 60:40 basis between central and local government. We are asking the National Party to endorse a pipeline of co-investment in flood resilience projects as part of your pre-election commitments, with the view to funding it through Budget 2027/28 if National leads the next Government.

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Attached is a summary of the Before the Deluge 3.0 business case developed by Te Uru Kahika. The full report will be delivered to you shortly and demonstrates both the magnitude of the challenge facing New Zealand and the opportunity to reduce future costs through sustained investment in resilience infrastructure.

We welcome any chance to continue this conversation with you, your colleagues and your team.

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Chair
Greater Wellington Regional Council
Te Uru Kahika Flood and resilience Sponsor

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