

## Kaihū River Working Group Record of Actions

Meeting held in the SEED  
Fosters Arcade  
42 Victoria Street  
on Wednesday 24 September 2025, commencing at 10:30 am

### Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, NRC Councillor John Blackwell  
Area 1 Representative, John Murray  
Area 3 Representative, John Greensmith  
Te Roroa Alternate Representative, Sharon Murray

### I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

#### Full Meeting

NRC Rivers Manager, Joe Camuso  
NRC GM Community Resilience, Lousia Gritt  
NRC Natural Hazards Specialist Sarah Gauden-Ing  
NRC Rivers and Natural Hazards Officer, Nicole Basher (online)  
NRC Secretariat, Haylee Labelle  
Alayne Fitness  
Colin Macdonald  
Cook Costello, Philip Cook  
KDC Land Drainage Coordinator, Wayne Crump  
NRC Councillor, Joe Carr (arrived at 10.42am)  
Jane Wright (arrived at 10.42am)  
Robert Wade (arrived at 10.42am)

The meeting commenced at 10.30am.

### Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

### Ngā Whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

Te Roroa Representative - Snow Tane, KDC Councillor - Ash Nayyar, Kieran Gilmore, Nancy Chaves,  
Cr Craw, Cr Robinson, Cr Shortland

### Record of Actions – 8 May 2025 (Item 3.1)

**Presented by:** Cr John Blackwell

#### Agreed action points:

- NIL

## Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 3.2)

**Presented by:** Cr John Blackwell

*Secretarial notes: John Greensmith has purchased a 25T long reach digger (16m) and has two experienced drivers. This digger will arrive in approximately 10days.*

### Agreed action points:

- NIL

## Presentation Slides (Item 3.3)

**Presented by:** Joe Camuso and Nicole Basher

*Secretarial notes:* Reviewed the current budget, surplus carryover, and allocation options for the coming year, sought committee direction on spending priorities for machine cleaning, spraying, and contingency items.

- Provided clarity on the \$10,000 in the budget for tree removal – this is a contingency that has been retained as there are often trees to remove.
- Confirmed that unspent funds from the previous year are carried forward (this was from spraying work not executed), resulting in a healthy balance available for the current year's works.
- Members expressed concerns about timber from removed trees being potential future risk in weather event situations. NRC have lifted and stacked trees for farmers to burn, NRC hasn't managed burning in the past. The Working Group agreed that this is the landowners responsibility and this is what was agreed previously. Landowners need to be reminded to burn in the appropriate season.
- It was agreed that if contract funds run out during machine cleaning, NRC is authorised to approve additional spending (within reason) to complete agreed works, with notification to the committee.

Reviewed the current and planned river maintenance activities for 2025/26 season, including machine cleaning, and spraying. The challenges of executing these works within budget and environmental constraints were discussed.

- Outlined the planned machine cleaning for the year, specifying targeted sections and noting that the scope is limited by a fixed budget, which often prevents completion of all desired works.
- The 2025 drone flight will go up to the bottle neck again using NRC drones
- Committee members expressed frustration with contractor reliability and communication, citing instances where work was incomplete or poorly coordinated in their view and called for improved notification and accountability from the council.
- In response to concerns, NRC agreed to explore assigning a dedicated supervisor to oversee machine cleaning, acknowledging that this would increase costs but could improve quality and accountability.

Discussed the ongoing challenges with the targeted rate system, the need for increased funding if the work programme was to be expanded, and the process for adjusting rate..

- Committee members expressed concerns that the current funding is insufficient for the required river maintenance, with increasing costs and a backlog of work leading to river deterioration and silting.
- Concerns were raised about the fairness of the targeted rate, with some contributors to the catchment not paying rates (an example was given of forestry). Staff pointed out that targeted rates were on the basis of those who benefit pay” as for other river schemes.
- The committee debated the merits of engaging external experts for oversight, with Joseph noting that while this could bring additional expertise, it would also increase costs compared to in-house management.
- NRC Rivers Team has committed to improving advance notification to landowners about scheduled works and to ensuring that feedback from the committee is incorporated into operational planning.
- Proposed that the working group identify desired outcomes for increased funding, after which NRC would cost out the work and present options for the next meeting, allowing informed decisions on future rate adjustments.

Discussed the spraying programme for bull rush and Manchurian wild rice, including methods, environmental restrictions, and the need for trialling different application techniques.

- Nicole described the phased approach to spraying, with Nancy planning to break the work into sections to minimise water testing costs and environmental impact, and to coordinate timing with machine cleaning. Explained the colour scheme on the map – Spring (November) treatment outlined in pink, if funds remain will continue downstream into green until funds are exhausted. Autumn treatment is the blue section, again if fund remain work will continue into the section green until funds are exhausted.
- Committee members recommended trialling various spraying methods—helicopter, boat, and handgun—to determine the most cost-effective and practical approach, with Nancy to incorporate feedback and hotspot mapping from the group.
- Noted that we haven’t been charged for Nancys time

**Agreed action points:**

- 1. Establish a process whereby, if machine cleaning funds run out mid-contract, NRC is authorised to allocate additional budget (e.g., up to 20% more) and notify the committee accordingly.**
- 2. NRC to send communication to landowners reminding them to burn/remove stacked tree debris in the appropriate season to prevent downstream blockages during future storms.**
- 3. NRC Rivers manager to contact Douglas Logging regarding the removal of felled trees and the viability of chipping.**
- 4. NRC to arrange for Nancy / engineer to visit the river before deciding on the spraying approach for problem areas.**
- 5. NRC Rivers and Natural Hazards Officer to meet with NRC Biosecurity Specialist - Pest Plants (Nancy) to confirm a plan for the MWR and bullrush work and communicate this to the working group**
- 6. Committee members were asked to mark hotspot areas for bull rush and Manchurian rice grass spraying on the provided maps and NRC will send these to Nancy for inclusion in the spraying programme.**

7. **NRC to assign a dedicated supervisor for the catchment to oversee machine cleaning operations and ensure accountability, with costs charged to the catchment budget.**
8. **NRC to improve communication with landowners regarding the timing and scope of machine cleaning and other works, ensuring they are informed before contractors arrive.**
9. **NRC to review additional work that could be undertaken if a higher targeted rate was charged.**

## **Wairoa and Kaihu Flood Hazard Maps (Item 3.4)**

**Presented by:** Sarah Gauden-Ing

*Secretarial notes: Sarah outlined the expansion of flood models to cover previously unmodelled areas, including the Kaihu catchment, and explained that these models inform council planning and hazard mapping. Joe described how Cyclone Gabriel produced record flows in several tributaries, highlighting the need for robust modelling and improved forecasting to manage future flood risks. Presented cross-sectional data comparing historical and recent river profiles, noting that while some silting and weed growth are evident, the machine cleaning programme has generally maintained channel capacity. Cautioned that older survey data may be less reliable due to sparse measurements and committed to refining calculations and standardising cross-section analysis for future reporting.*

*Sarah provided a map at the meeting and asked committee members to advise if this is their experience in the catchment. Before the hazard maps are published we want to ensure they match the lived experience particularly the upper Kaihu which wasn't modelled previously,*

### **Agreed action points:**

1. **Committee members were asked to review and provide feedback on the new flood hazard maps, especially for the upper Kaihu area, before publication. Members to contact Sarah.**

## **Whakamutunga (Conclusion)**

**The meeting concluded at 12.14pm.**