

## Urban Whangārei Rivers Working Group Record of Actions

Meeting held in Tutukaka-Nui room  
36 Water Street, Whangārei  
on Friday 12 September 2025, commencing at 10:00 am - 11.30am

### Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson - NRC Councillor, Jack Craw  
Iwi representative, Mira Norris (online)  
Water CCO, Andrew Carvell

### I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

#### Full Meeting

NRC River Management Engineer, Barney Brotherhood  
NRC Rivers Manager, Joseph Camuso  
NRC Rivers Asset Management Officer, Dale Roberts  
NRC Secretariat, Haylee Labelle  
WDC Alternate, Councillor Phil Halse  
WDC Stormwater Manager, Ravi Muwal  
WDC Representative, Matt De Boer  
NRC Councillor, Joe Carr (online)

The meeting commenced at 10am with karakia from the chair.

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

### Ngā Whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

#### Moved (Halse / Carvell)

WDC Mayor Vince Cocurullo, Northchamber Representative - Leah McKerrow, Dominic Kula, Bernadette Aperahama, Cr Crawford, Sarah Guaden-Ing, Louisa Gritt, Cr Robinson, Cr Shortland, Cr Stolwerk, Simon Weston

### Record of Actions – 3 April 2025 (Item 3.1)

Presented by: Cr Craw

#### Moved (Craw / Carvell)

**Secretarial notes:** Introduced Ravi Muwal who is the newly appointed stormwater manager at WDC

#### Agreed action points:

1. NRC Secretariat to add Ravi Muwal (WDC) to the email contact group for the meetings

## Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 3.2)

**Presented by:** Cr Craw

**Secretarial notes:** discussed the progress of the solar panel project at the dam, including the involvement of Northpower, the need for grid connection approval, and the exploration of alternative, cost-efficient solar panel systems with input from Mira and other groups.

- Dale provided an update on the solar array project at the dam, noting that the business case has been approved and the project is progressing to detailed design, with Phil, Northpower and a designer involved in site visits to finalise the reservoir connection.
- It was clarified that Northpower's primary role is to approve grid connection, not to supply the panels, and that the project team must ensure the chosen system is compatible with Northpower's grid requirements.
- Mira highlighted that there are multiple types of solar panel systems available, including more cost-efficient options used by farmers and businesses, and offered to share contacts and information about these alternatives with the project team.

### Agreed action points:

1. **Email information and contacts for other groups installing cost-efficient solar panels to the NRC Rivers Manager. (Mira)**

## Presentation Slides (Item 3.3)

**Presented by:** Joe Camuso and Dale Roberts

**Secretarial notes:** Led a detailed review of the dam and river scheme budgets, addressing questions from participants about increased maintenance costs, income from rental properties, debt repayment schedules, and compliance-related expenditures.

- Budget Performance and Expenditure: reviewed the previous and current year's budgets, noting that major expenditures included dam maintenance, vegetation clearance, and property management, with some costs deferred to the current year due to ongoing dam safety assurance programmes.
- Questions were raised about increased spending on tenanted properties at the dam, with explanations provided that tree felling, gutter repairs, and healthy homes compliance upgrades were necessary, while rental income remained stable.
- explained that the dam's debt is being paid off faster than originally planned due to favourable interest rates and additional income, with the projected payoff now expected 4-5 years ahead of the original 25-year schedule.
- Insurance costs were discussed, with the team noting recent favourable deals due to combined council agreements, but also highlighting concerns about future changes to these agreements due to sector reforms; compliance costs for dam safety reviews and assurance programmes were also budgeted.
- Reviewed recent flood events, dam performance, and ongoing maintenance challenges, including sediment and vegetation management, design issues with drains, and the need for more permanent solutions.

- Compared recent flood events, noting that while the 2020 event was larger in terms of inflow, the reservoir did not exceed one-third of its total capacity, demonstrating the dam's effectiveness in managing extreme weather.
- Regular maintenance is required to clear drains and manage vegetation growth, with Dale describing the challenges of frequent blockages and the need for more efficient, less machinery-intensive solutions.
- Discussed design flaws in the drainage system, considering options such as installing a rock groyne or concrete apron to facilitate easier manual clearing and reduce reliance on heavy equipment. In terms of the future works required, we would like to complete these this year with an approximate spend of \$20k required. The drains are part of the dams everyday use and drain ground water out of the embankment.
- Mira provided historical context, explaining that persistent water flow in certain areas is due to the original Nihotetia stream, and that natural waterways continue to influence site conditions despite engineering interventions.
- Discussed inspections and maintenance of flood protection infrastructure, including floodwalls, floodgates, and riverbank vegetation, with attention to issues such as undermining, missing gates, and the need for ongoing monitoring.
  - Inspections revealed undermining of a floodwall on Woods Rd and a missing or potentially altered floodgate, prompting plans to reinstate rock armouring and investigate the presence of internal floodgate mechanisms. NRC Rivers Asset Management Officer will be investigating this further.
  - Reviewed recent riverbank inspections, noting that previous large-scale vegetation and debris removal had reduced current risks, but ongoing monitoring is necessary to prevent blockages and flooding, especially near bridges.
  - Discrepancies between modelled and observed river flows were identified at Whareora, with plans to engage the hydrology team to improve gauging and ensure more accurate flood risk assessments. NRC Rivers Asset Management Officer completed a river inspection here earlier this week and some vegetation will be removed.

**Agreed action points:**

- 1. NRC Rivers Manager to confirm the projected date for paying off the dam debt.**
- 2. NRC Rivers Manager to check the term length of the current insurance policy and confirm if it is annual or three-yearly.**
- 3. NRC Rivers Asset Management Officer to meet with insurance brokers and discuss the potential impacts of two waters reform on combined insurance agreements at the upcoming national management meeting in November.**
- 4. NRC Rivers Asset Management Officer to investigate the missing or internal floodgate mechanism at Woods Rd and reinstate appropriate support under the floodwall.**
- 5. NRC Rivers Manager to liaise with the hydrology team (including Allen) to address discrepancies in river flow modelling and explore options for more accurate gauging at Whareora.**

## **WDC Projects Update (Stormwater pump station – Morningside & Attenuation Project – Tikipunga) (Item 3.4)**

**Presented by:** Andrew Carvell

**Secretarial notes:** Andrew presented updates on stormwater pump station operations, the completion of major drainage works, and the design of new attenuation structures to manage urban flooding and support future growth.

- Discussed the operational status of a new pump station at Morningside, including its performance during recent events, the completion timeline for associated pipework, and the use of hydraulic modelling to assess flood reduction benefits. The pipes are not yet completed but will be finished by the end of October. This project received \$3M of RIF funding.
- The pump station project was delivered on time and nearly on budget, with council approval to pool funding and use the project as an example of effective delivery; it was clarified that the project was not funded as a joint venture.
- Plans for a new attenuation structure in the northern growth area were discussed, including property acquisition, feasibility studies, and the use of modelling to optimise flood peak reduction and support development without increasing downstream risk. Funding is secured for property purchases and consents will view to start construction next year. Looking at the opportunity to reinstate the old wetland system.

**Agreed action points:**

1. **NRC Secretariat to circulate a copy of the presentation with the minutes to the working party**

### **Joint NRC/WDC Whangarei Urban Flood Management Strategy Update (Item 3.5)**

**Presented by:** Matt De Boer

Secretarial notes: Discussed the progress of the urban flood strategy (cofounded project), including technical assessments, stakeholder engagement, data improvements, and the challenges of clarifying roles and responsibilities between councils.

- The technical assessment phase of the urban flood strategy is now underway, with consultants engaged to deliver recommendations by mid-next year, and a focus on robust modelling, scenario testing, and investment objectives.
- A memorandum of understanding is in place between councils, with regular steering group meetings, technical advisory groups, and public engagement activities; a joint workshop is planned for April to facilitate decision-making.
- There is a GM steering group which meets every three months but noted that there is no joint working group for Councillors – they go to each Council for updates.
- Contractors are surveying stormwater networks to address data gaps, with upgrades to hydrological models to reflect current and future climate projections, aiming to improve the accuracy of flood risk assessments.
- The discussion highlighted overlapping and unclear responsibilities between regional and district councils for flood and stormwater management, the complexity of funding mechanisms, and the need for a coordinated approach, especially in light of sector reforms.

- Mira and others emphasised the importance of involving tangata whenua and local communities in planning and decision-making, particularly regarding culturally sensitive proposals and the need for transparent, inclusive processes.

**Agreed action points:**

- **Urban Flooding Strategy Technical Assessment: Share a copy of the completed strategic case for the urban flooding strategy with interested parties. Matt De Boer**
- **Confirmed the intent is to reestablish this working group for the next Council with a view to extend the TOR to have more oversight**

## **Any other Business (Item 3.6)**

**Presented by:** Cr Craw

**Secretarial notes:** Long-Term Flood Risk Management Options and Decision-Making: participants debated long-term flood risk management options for the city, including structural interventions, land use changes, and the need for comprehensive planning, funding, and community involvement.

- Outlined that the strategy will consider a spectrum of options, from 'do nothing' to major infrastructure such as barrages or land raising, with technical, financial, and social trade-offs to be evaluated.
- Mira strongly opposed certain structural solutions on cultural grounds, advocating for early and meaningful involvement of tangata whenua in both option development and design phases.
- It was agreed that councils will ultimately decide on preferred options, but that working groups and community representatives will be consulted throughout, with short-term actions and further investigations possible as options are narrowed.
- Participants discussed the need for long-term funding mechanisms to support major interventions, the importance of aligning development contributions, and the challenges posed by changing council membership and priorities.
- Andrew Carvell has been appointed as the CCO Implementation Director for 10-months, someone will step into his current role in the interim and Ravi will support this working group in his absence.

**Agreed action points:**

- NIL

## **Whakamutunga (Conclusion)**

**The meeting concluded at 11.47am with karakia by Andrew.**