

## Media release

13 August 2024

### Flood resilience funding for Franz Josef welcomed

The West Coast Regional Council is welcoming the Government's announcement of funding for flood resilience work in Franz Josef.

The Minister for Regional Development, Shane Jones announced funding for the first stage of *Before the Deluge* projects following the Regional Growth Summit held in Nelson yesterday.

He said the Government, through the Regional Development Ministerial Group, has approved \$101,094 million of funding from the Regional Infrastructure Fund towards 42 flood resilience projects.

West Coast Regional Council Chair Peter Haddock says Minister Jones' announcement was great news for the West Coast.

"The Waiho River Northside Havill Wall Stopbank extension and Southside Protection Stopbank work is one of the projects on the list for funding.

"Council is really pleased to be partnering with central government in this work which is an important step towards mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events and protecting essential infrastructure in our communities through investing in prevention rather than clean up."

Central Government will meet 60% of the cost of the projects while regional and unitary councils are contributing 40% in a co-investment approach. For Franz Josef that means \$6 million in grant funding with the Council contribution being \$4 million.

The Before the Deluge work is consistent with the strategy recommended by the Waiho Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in October 2023, says Cr Haddock.

"Their report recommended strengthening the Waiho banks to enable them to hold for up to 10 years and to support master planning on the south side which would consider future land use options given the flood risk.

"This is especially welcome for southside landowners as, till now, the north side has been the beneficiary of considerable government and local share investment to strengthen the north side flood walls. This work is making good progress.

"This new funding means the overall design of the flood scheme can be completed on the south side."

Peter Haddock says Council has been in discussions with the Franz Josef community, especially southside members, for nearly 12 months.

“The announcement is a great outcome after a lot of hard work by Council and the community together. This support means we can get on with the essential work of protecting our communities and vital infrastructure which ultimately benefits the entire country.

“Council will be going to Franz Josef on Thursday, 29 August to ask the Franz Josef Joint Committee whether it will recommend to Council that it should proceed with funding the 40 percent share. This would be funded by a loan.”

WCRC is already working on improving Civil Defence emergency management planning, another key recommendation in the first phase of the Waiho TAG report.

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