

11 April 2024

File ref: OIAPR-1274023063-26165

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2024-049**

I refer to your request for information dated 15 March, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 15 March. You have requested the following:

- 1. Does GWRC presently have responsibility for monitoring of the Waikanae Estuary?*
- 2. Has GWRC monitored the Waikanae River in the past 15 years?*
- 3. If so, did they record the river's position in regards to the trigger points?*
- 4. Does GWRC consider the houses pictured above, which are on the edge of the Waikanae Estuary Reserve, to be at risk of said encroachment?*
- 5. If not, why not?*
- 6. Will GWRC cut the Waikanae river mouth?*

### **Greater Wellington's response follows:**

We note additional information was supplied to you on 8 February 2024 in response to official information request reference 2023-311 the answers below are supplementary to the information provided previously.

#### **1. Does GWRC presently have responsibility for monitoring of the Waikanae Estuary?**

The Waikanae estuary is within Department of Conservation land and is managed by them as a part of their scientific reserve, you can find more information about this area on their website here:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/waikanae-estuary>

**2. Has GWRC monitored the Waikanae River in the past 15 years?**

Yes, Greater Wellington conducts regular cross-sectional surveys of the Waikanae River. These cross sections are spaced every 100m between a point downstream of the Waikanae Estuary Scenic Reserve Carpark to the Waste Water Treatment Plant. We also undertake regular aerial photography of the river.

**3. If so, did they record the river's position in regards to the trigger points?**

No, we do not maintain specific records of the rivers position in regards to trigger points.

**4. Does GWRC consider the houses pictured above, which are on the edge of the Waikanae Estuary Reserve, to be at risk of said encroachment?**

While it is evident that the northern part of Paraparaumu Beach is currently experiencing an erosion phase, we do not believe the erosion is yet directly threatening houses from being undermined.

**5. If not, why not?**

Currently there is a dune buffer ranging from 25 - 50m wide between the houses and the beach along the shoreline south of the Waikanae River mouth that is providing sufficient protection to properties at the northern end of Paraparaumu beach.

The erosion that is occurring is a result of natural coastal and fluvial processes. As described in LGOIMA response 2023-311, the river mouth outlet is mobile and ranges across a distance of shoreline of around 900m from north to south, but predominantly to the south. The exit is controlled by two dynamic sand spits that grow and erode in response to the dynamic interplay between fluvial and coastal processes, sediment transport, wind and wave activity, storm events and ongoing sea level rise.

The northern spit is usually larger, containing more sand and generally holding the river mouth in a more southerly position. This is due to the predominant north and northwest wind and wave conditions that drive a southern directed longshore sediment transport system. Occasionally, large floods will break through the northern spit and cause the channel to flow on a straight westward path to the sea. After this occurs there is usually a southward progression of the river mouth again until the cycle repeats. The southern spit is generally smaller, but no less dynamic and is subject to the same cycles of erosion and growth seen in the northern spit. These changes are natural and are part of the geomorphic processes of Waikanae River mouth and estuary environment.

In addition, it is evident that the northern part of Paraparaumu Beach, extending over a kilometre south from the river mouth, has been experiencing periodic episodes of erosion for many decades, with the most recent episode starting in mid-2016, during which time there has been a sustained period of erosion in response to a series of significant winter storms, particularly July 2016, July 2018

and July 2022. These storms have caused substantial erosion to the dunes, that have struggled to recover from the impacts they have sustained.

**6. Will GWRC cut the Waikanae river mouth?**

Greater Wellington will cut the mouth when the triggers are reached and the risk is assessed to require a mouth cut.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



**Lian Butcher**

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