

9 March 2023

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins  
Prime Minister  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Hon Grant Robertson  
Minister of Cyclone Recovery  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Tēnā korua

## **“After the Deluge” – building New Zealand’s resilience to floods**

On behalf of affected communities, please accept our thanks for the strong leadership you have exercised in responding to Cyclone Gabrielle. The damage has affected all New Zealanders, some to a devastating extent.

The time is now right for Government to work with Te Uru Kahika to deliver a pipeline of investment in climate resilient river management infrastructure. This will be a critical component of New Zealand’s adaptation to the severe weather events that are now affecting us. River management structures are critical to protect other infrastructure and communities. They are the first step to take in adapting to climate change.

Late last year we sent Ministers a report titled “Before the Deluge”<sup>1</sup>, discussing the risk posed by flooding rivers. It established a strong case for Government returning as a co-investor in flood resilience infrastructure, together with regional councils, to accelerate our response to the increasingly severe impacts of climate change. We sought government co-investment of \$257m over the next three years, to complete 92 “shovel-ready” projects across New Zealand.

Cyclone Gabrielle has been a wake-up call for everyone, including the regional sector. New Zealand clearly cannot afford to wait. We need to up our game further and plan for fit-for-purpose flood resilient infrastructure to be in place within a decade.

Te Uru Kahika has revisited our proposal in “Before the Deluge” and are now proposing a 10-year pipeline of flood-resilience co-investment, to better match the need and expectation of our communities. Our proposal would also deliver savings and more effective, efficient, and timely actions to substantially reduce flood risk at most vulnerable locations throughout New Zealand.

To realise this goal, we now seek a co-investment commitment of \$200m per annum over the next three years, and then \$250m per annum in years 6-10. Working within

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gw.govt.nz/document-library/?q=Before%20the%20deluge%20Co%20Investment%20in%20climate%20resilience>



our existing Climate Resilience governance and delivery structures, we can deliver immediate, positive, practical, and affordable resilience-improving infrastructure.

The benefits for Government of doing this are significant. Capacity and capability would be built and retained right through the supply chain. We would optimise Inter-regional cooperation and procurement savings. Consenting and community involvement activities would be more strategically founded. Basically, more would be done better, more quickly.

We all understand this work is only one component of a more comprehensive approach to adaptation, but it is a critical and much needed first step.

The attached report “River Flood Risk Resilience – Lessons from Cyclone Gabrielle” describes these benefits in more detail, along with the supporting matters.

We would be pleased to urgently meet with you and your Ministerial colleagues to discuss our suggested solution.

Ngā mihi nui



Doug Leeder

  
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CC:

Hon Kiritapu Allan, Minister of Regional Development

Hon Stuart Nash, Minister of Economic Development and Forestry

Hon Kieran McNulty, Minister of Local Government, Emergency Management and Rural Communities

Hon James Shaw, Minister for Climate Change

Attachment: “River Flood Risk Resilience – Lessons from Cyclone Gabrielle” – Te Uru Kahika, March 2023

