



5 August 2023

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

### **Strengthening The Resilience of Aotearoa New Zealand's Critical Infrastructure Phase 1 Consultation**

Tēnā koutou katoa,

The Rivers Group welcomes the opportunity to help identify the issues with New Zealand's current approach to infrastructure resilience and potential mechanisms to enhance critical infrastructure resilience.

The Rivers Group is a joint technical interest group of Engineering New Zealand and Water NZ with approximately 400 members spread across all regions of New Zealand. The Group incorporates a wide variety of fields and of practice and interest to do with rivers, including cultural health, water quality, water quantity, flood management, energy generation and environment protection. Our multi-disciplinary membership spans research, consultancy, science and engineering across a range of institutions, including universities, Crown Research Institutes, consultants, and regional councils. Our membership also includes representatives from community organisations with an interest in river management.

We support the separate submission made by Water New Zealand on this subject.

On behalf of our own members, the Rivers Group Committee would like to make the following points and ask that these be taken into consideration in revising critical infrastructure resilience policy, regulation and delivery:

**1. Flood protection assets need to be considered critical infrastructure.**

Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle, and the Auckland Anniversary Storm have this year demonstrated the critical importance of functioning and effective flood protection assets if societal resilience is to be enhanced. The failures of flood protection assets in Tairāwhiti, Hawkes Bay and Auckland have demonstrated the vulnerability of our society in light of these events. Flood protection assets are not currently identified as critical infrastructure and we are concerned that this situation must change to enhance community resilience in light of the increasing frequency of such events forecast in a changing climate.

**2. We agree that information sharing is a barrier to resilient infrastructure (Barrier 1)**

There is a need to improve information sharing between Councils and Unitary Authorities, Crown Research Institutes, Consultancies, Universities and Government agencies to ensure

datasets informing best practice are shared and communication lines and reporting are simplified.

**3. There are currently no national standards for flood forecasting, flood mapping or flood protection assets (Barrier 2)**

The absence of national standards means the quality and delivery of flood forecasting, flood mapping and flood protection assets varies significantly across the country. Introducing national standards should lift the bar across all regions and ensure resilient infrastructure for all.

**4. Flood forecasting has a role to play in infrastructure resilience, particularly in the light of climate change.**

Flood forecasting is much more than just weather forecasting as it takes into account antecedent conditions and routing of floodwaters. The resilience of infrastructure is predicated on effective and accurate flood forecasting. Climate change means that flood forecasting will become even more critical for infrastructure resilience than it has been hitherto.

Ngā mihi nui,



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