

Report No.	19-58
Information Only - No Decision Required	

## HARBOURMASTER'S REPORT

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the **Manawatu River Users' Advisory Group (MRUAG)** with an update on matters relating to navigation and safety on the Manawatu River and its tributaries.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 19-58.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There is no direct financial impact arising from matters discussed in this item.

### 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. This is a public item and therefore Council may deem this to be sufficient to advise the public

### 5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. There is no significant business risk from matters discussed in this item.

### 6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. This report covers the period December 2018 – June 2019.

### 7. RIVER EVENTS

- 7.1. The annual meeting and BBQ for Honorary Enforcement Officers and support organisations took place on 11 December 2018 at the **Manawatu Marine Boating Club (MMBC)**. The meeting also included members of Manawatu Coastguard and MMBC. The meeting was very beneficial in maintaining and enhancing the important relationships between the organisations and members and was a great information sharing opportunity.
- 7.2. The Manawatu Power Boat Club held their Annual Gold Cup regatta for 30-31 March 2019 at Whirokino. A temporary reservation was applied for, and supported by a public notice placed in the Manawatu Standard prior to the event. Feedback from the organisers was that they again held a very successful regatta and the weather and river conditions were perfect for the event.
- 7.3. On 9-12 April 2019 the **New Zealand (NZ)** Army 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Regiment conducted joint on water training in conjunction with NZ Coastguard on the area of the river from downstream of the Whirokino boat ramp to the River mouth. The training involved general river operations and also training in bar crossing. Honorary River Wardens, MMBC, and Foxton Sports Radio (Marine VHF Radio Operators) were advised of these activities.
- 7.4. Easter weekend 2019 saw the Manawatu Marine Boating Club hold their annual fishing competition. This year saw 108 boats entered along with 400 anglers in what was a hugely successful event for the club and participants. The weather played its part in all but the

third day of scheduled fishing, being the Sunday where strong north-westerly winds out at sea saw rough conditions on the bar. The correct decision was made and fishing was cancelled for the day. The previous two days saw some great conditions, particularly on the Friday, with a great number of fish caught and good fishing enjoyed by competitors. The organisers of the competition again need to be commended on the overall organisation of the event, which despite the significant amount of vessels involved resulted in no incidents or injuries to any participants.

- 7.5. The Manawatu Coastguard continue to play a significant role in the safety aspect of the competition, which obviously involves multiple crossings of an at times challenging river bar by a huge number of boats over this weekend. To come through with no incidents is a compliment to all involved.
- 7.6. Members may well be aware of the launching of a privately owned and very large Catamaran named 'The Beast' at the MMBC boat ramp at Foxton Beach in March. The boat was built by Profab Central Engineering in Palmerston North and transported to Foxton Beach over two days in three sections where it was subsequently assembled and fitted out on site prior to being launched in early March. Most will be aware of the huge amount of activity and interest that the vessel attracted particularly on the day of launching and also on the day that 'The Beast' left the Manawatu River on its maiden voyage to Wellington on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March which coincided with a king tide. A good relationship exists between the boat builder and the Harbourmaster who was kept well informed of the relevant activities in relation to the vessel.
- 7.7. Images of the Catamaran leaving the Manawatu River Estuary and crossing the river bar can be seen below for Members' information.





05 June 2019

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- 7.8. The Harbourmaster has not received notification of any further events planned for the Manawatu River at this time.

## 8. GENERAL COMMENT

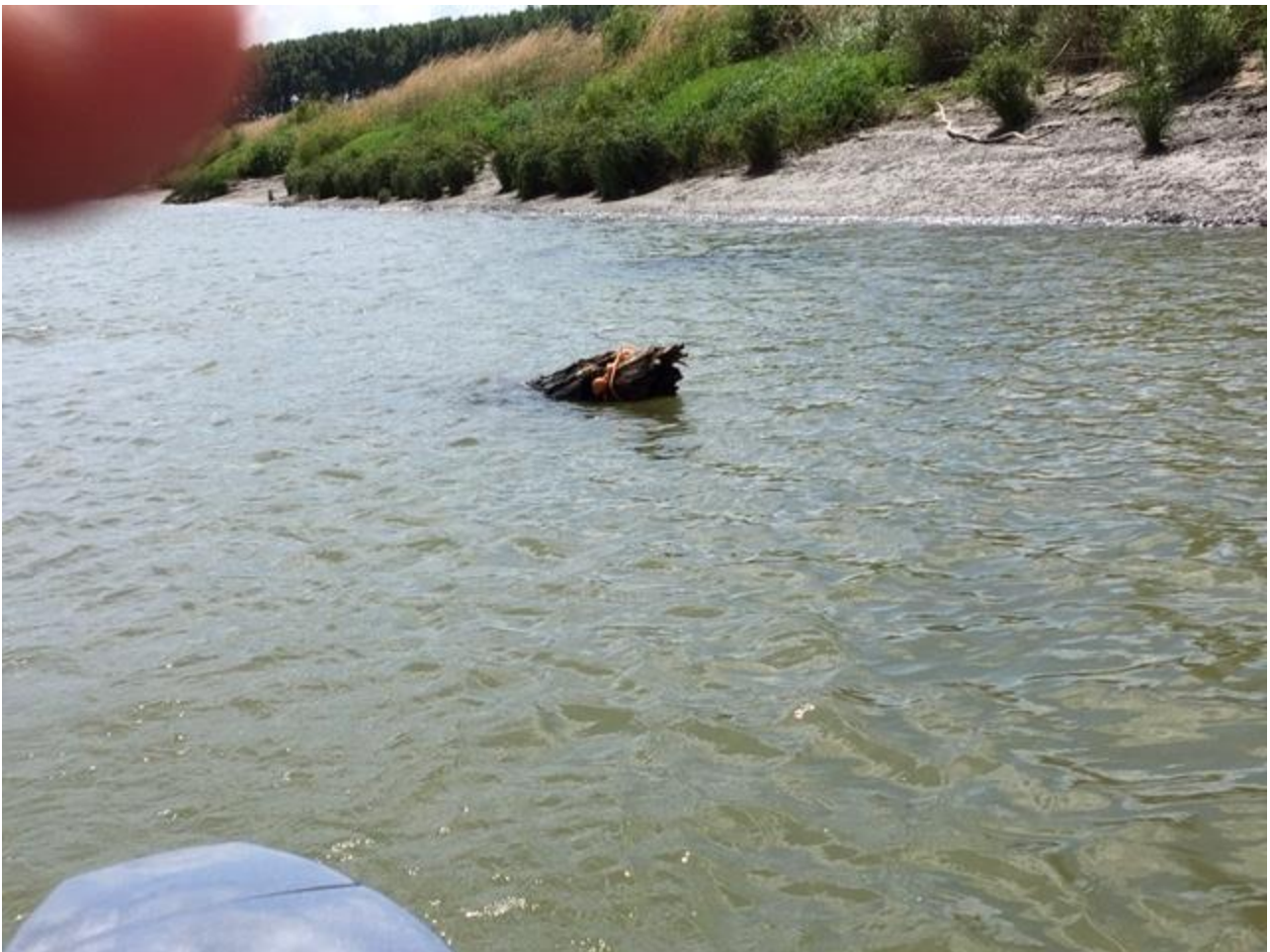
### Monitoring of Recreational Activity over the summer period at the Manawatu Estuary and Whirokino.

- 8.1. Members have been kept well informed around ongoing discussions in regard to on water recreational activities at the above locations. Those discussions have previously arisen in regard to vessel operator behavior, in particular Jet skis, over the last two summers.
- 8.2. The Harbourmaster has continued to monitor recreational activities on the lower reaches of the river and has had ongoing discussions with stakeholders over this time. A recent meeting with the MMBC Executive Committee and other stakeholders confirmed the level of comfort that exists in regard to the ongoing monitoring of recreational activities on the river and potential measures that could be adopted in the coming summer months.
- 8.3. In reviewing the measures undertaken over the past summer periods there was general agreement that this work is contributing to an improvement in the overall behavior of recreational users, but also that we need to adapt and continue to take opportunities to encourage responsible use of this waterway and surrounding areas, and implement measures to ensure that occurs.
- 8.4. Those measures included monitoring over the summer seasons by a number of agencies under the direction of the Harbourmaster, with the assistance of the following organisations:
- Manawatu Coastguard;
  - Manawatu River Honorary Wardens;
  - Manawatu Marine Boating Club;
  - Foxton Beach Volunteer Beach Wardens;
  - Foxton Surf Lifesaving Club.
- 8.5. Further to the above, the Harbourmaster also took the opportunity to recently meet with **Maritime NZ (MNZ)** officers who were involved in the now completed 'No Excuses Campaign' as part of the Safer Boating Forum. As a result of those conversations there are a number of measures that MNZ can and are willing to implement, as part of our ongoing approach to improve and maintain recreational safety on the river. The Harbourmaster will continue to work closely with MNZ officers, and members will be kept informed as these measures are adopted and implemented.

## 9. REPORTING OF RIVER HAZARDS

- 9.1. From time to time, the Harbourmaster receives reports from members of the public or organisations, in regard to navigation hazards which enables actions to be taken to mitigate an issue that has been notified. An example of this was a report that was received from a member of the public in January 2019 in regard to a submerged log just under the surface of the water within a water ski priority section of the river, approximately 3 km up river of the SH1 bridge at Whirokino. The report was made by a boatie, who whilst towing a water skier, narrowly missed the log, seeing it at what he described as 'the last minute'.
- 9.2. The boatie managed to tie a rope around the log and pull it from the middle of the river, closer to the river edge, where it was a little more visible to on water traffic. He also tied a small buoy to the top of the log as a warning device. The Manawatu Coastguard unit was subsequently notified and were engaged to make an attempt to pull the log out of the water to a location where it was no longer a threat to navigation safety. This was successfully completed on their next training evening. This was a good example of public and inter-agency liaison helping to keep our river environment safe for users.

9.3. Images of the log in situ for Members' information.



## 10. NEW MANAWATU RIVER BRIDGE BUILD – UPDATE

- 10.1. Members will be aware of the construction that is now nearing completion on the new river bridge across the Manawatu River, and the replacement of the old Whirokino Trestle bridge across the adjacent Regional Council Floodway.
- 10.2. Navigation safety measures have previously been undertaken by the implementation of a 5 knot speed restriction on the river, 200 metres upstream and downstream of the bridge construction site, with all river users, including all known river user groups, advised of both the speed restriction on the impacted section of the river and of the hazard to navigation safety. Brian Perry Civil (new bridge builders) also installed an information board at the Whirokino boat ramp on Matarakapa Road to inform river users in that area.
- 10.3. As the new river bridge construction has progressed, the Harbourmaster was advised by Brian Perry Civil in March that the installation of the super t beams onto the now completed bridge piles would be taking place over a number of days in April. The huge concrete bridge beams would be lowered into place across the river with the use of a massive 600 tonne crane brought in from the Waikato. Discussions with the construction team established that it would be undesirable to have any watercraft in the vicinity of the bridge while this work was taking place. Accordingly, this section of the river was closed to on water craft over the two periods of April (five days in total) between the hours of 8am-5pm, to mitigate any risk to river users in the vicinity. Stakeholders were advised as appropriate, and relevant advertisements were placed notifying the closure of the section of the river during those periods. No issues arose during the periods of river closure and that work is now completed.
- 10.4. Images of the installation of the super t beams on new Manawatu River Bridge, below for Members' reference.





## 11. MANAWATU GORGE SLIP – CLOSURE OF RIVER

- 11.1. This item is brought to members for the purpose of an update.
- 11.2. Members will recall that at the December 2017 MRUAG meeting, an item was brought to outline actions taken in regard to the risk to river users in the Manawatu Gorge from rock fall due to cliff instability, with the potential for a large slip to occur in an area known as “Kerry’s Wall”. This was highlighted by the **NZ Transport Authority (NZTA)** which resulted in the road through the gorge being permanently closed.
- 11.3. Whilst the risk in the area of Kerry’s Wall had been quantified by NZTA in terms of size, the gorge is some 9km long and the potential for large slips to occur in other areas also exists, particularly following a major earthquake. This could potentially result in a complete blockage of the gorge creating an extreme upstream flood risk, and a downstream risk, if there was an uncontrolled release of water from behind a resultant dam created by a slip.

11.4. Actions taken at this time included:

- Closing the gorge to on-water activities via public notice under the navigation and water safety bylaw. Whilst we cannot police the gorge 24/7 we can control those wishing to hold specific on-water events in the area;
- Advisory to all known river user groups of the issue;
- Erection of signage at strategic river entry points warning of the danger;
- Engagement with key stake holders (Horizons, Department of Conservation, Palmerston North City Council, Tararua District Council, Kiwi Rail, and New Zealand Police) to develop a response plan on notification of a slip affecting the river occurring.

11.5. As a result of the slip potential identified at Kerry's Wall by the NZTA **GNS Science (GNS)** were subsequently engaged by Horizons to try and quantify the actual risk through the entire gorge, not just in the area highlighted by NZTA. The following methodology is being used by GNS:

- A literature review of all relevant documentation/reports associated with slope failure within the gorge;
- The production of a report on the possible associated flood hazard effects arising from slope failure within the gorge to determine the level of risk; and
- Upstream flood modelling based upon the risk scenarios and flood modelling outcomes using a simple 'bathtub' approach.

11.6. Timeline for the project was commencing 1 December 2018 with a completion date of 30 June 2019. Once Horizons receive the completed report from GNS, the content of it will be considered and next steps and required actions developed. Members will be kept informed.

## 12. SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Ross Brannigan  
**HARBOURMASTER**

Ged Shirley  
**GROUP MANAGER REGIONAL SERVICES  
& INFORMATION**

## ANNEXES

There are no attachments to this report.