



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION UPDATE (July 2021)
Building community resilience and reducing flood risk in a changing climate:
Towards a flood risk reduction strategy for Anzac Parade

INTRODUCTION

In 2018 Horizons Regional Council consulted with Whanganui residents about how best to address river flooding of parts of Whanganui. According to its Long-term Plan, Horizons introduced mandated provisions to “*make the Anzac Parade area more resilient to flooding*” (HRC, 2018, p. 7). Horizons Regional Council, in dialogue with the Whanganui District Council, has appointed Massey University to provide advice on how to reduce flood risk and increase community resilience on Anzac Parade. This information sheet describes the project, including the flood risk context, the project aim, team and activities, and opportunities for interested and affected parties to contribute.

FLOOD RISK IN WHANGANUI

The Whanganui district is exposed to many natural hazards, with floods having caused significant economic and social impacts in recent times. Climate change projections developed by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) for the Manawatu-Whanganui region indicate that there will be a significant increase in the frequency and intensity of rainfall events; an overall increase in rainfall during the winter season, and an increase in sediment loads. In short, this means that the frequency of large extreme flood events is increasing and will continue to increase. Low-lying areas of Whanganui adjacent to the river will become more exposed to extreme flood events. Flood risk reduction actions are already incorporated into District Council and Regional Council planning provisions, such as the Horizons Long-term Plan 2018-2028, and special attention has been given to parts of the Anzac Parade area. This area was significantly affected in the June 2015 flood event, causing resident displacement, and damage to infrastructure and about 100 homes. It is inevitable that there will be future extreme flood events that exceed the design standards of existing protective works. In addition, after careful consideration, Horizons has concluded that improving the existing protection (stop-banks) is an unaffordable and ineffective solution for the long-term sustainability of the area. Hence the urgent need to identify a pool of alternative proactive and innovative short, medium, and long-term risk reduction and resilience building measures (e.g.,: improved flood-warning and evacuation systems, flood-proofing residences, raising houses, managed retreat, etc.).

THE PROJECT AIM

The aim is to create a co-designed strategy to reduce flood risk and increase community resilience in Anzac Parade. The feasibility of a range of community-wide and property-specific interventions will be assessed. Recommendations will be made based on the implications of alternative interventions for flood risk reduction, resilience building, and resident and community well-being.

THE PROJECT TEAM AND CORE ACTIVITIES

The project is led by Massey’s Professor Bruce Glavovic and Dr. Martín García Cartagena, who are experts in natural hazards planning, flood risk reduction, and community resilience building. Other specialists may become involved in developing the strategy. We aim to build shared understanding about the risks faced, and the pros and cons of alternative interventions in the short-, medium- and long-term. The recommendations made will be based on the best available information and consider the strengths and weaknesses of regulatory and non-regulatory provisions for flood risk reduction and resilience building in Whanganui.

To date, initial conversations have been held with more than 20 people from multiple government offices at central, regional, and local levels, as well as local and regional councilors, relevant iwi authorities, Red Cross, and the insurance sector. Their input has provided background information about flood risk, and some aspects of the viability of options for the area. A summary of this initial work has been presented to both Horizons Regional Council and Whanganui District Council for information, and local elected members feedback has been considered in planning the next steps of this project. Findings from this initial background work will soon be made publicly available.

This project is founded on respecting the views and needs of tangata whenua as original inhabitants of this place and their ongoing guardianship, rights and responsibilities to the land. To honor and respect the unique cultural and legal status of the awa, (Te Awa Tupua, Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act 2017), we have consulted and sought



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guidance from Te Rūnanga o Tūpoho and they have agreed to support this process and contribute as foundation partners in this project. In addition, Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui has also been consulted and will be kept informed as the project unfolds and opportunity for this organization to participate and contribute as they consider necessary.

In August 2020, Horizons Regional Council sent a letter to all residents of Anzac Parade to introduce this strategy formulation project. Public consultation with residents of the area was meant to start by late September 2020, but due to COVID-19 complications and the longer than expected time taken to do initial background work, the public consultation stage had to be postponed until 2021. We are now initiating engagement with local residents, property owners, and other interested and affected parties through information sharing and a series of small group meetings / workshops and public meetings that will take place in the coming months.

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE?

This initial public consultation phase will consist of a series of conversations with residents and property owners, as well as other interested and affected parties. We would very much appreciate your involvement in this project, including your views on:

1. The role/s you have played or experience you have in relation to Whanganui flooding.
2. How do you and other people view flood risk along Anzac Parade?
3. What could be done, by whom, and when, to manage this flood risk in the short- (1-10 years), medium- (10-50 years) and long-term (50+ years)?
4. What are the main barriers and opportunities to reduce flood risk and build resilience in Anzac Parade?

Participating in this project may involve your participation in two or three conversations in the next two to three months. The conversations will be held in small groups and are expected to take about 90 minutes. The group conversations will be scheduled as shown in the attached schedule document, and you can enroll in any of the programmed conversations. With your permission, the conversations will be recorded and transcribed. Information obtained from the conversations will be stored securely by the researchers for the duration of the project, and may be destroyed thereafter. **The findings will be reported so that the individual identity of participants is strictly confidential, unless participants indicate otherwise.** You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to: decline to answer any particular question; withdraw from the study; ask any questions about the study at any time; provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher; be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded; and ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the conversation.

COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

Because we are currently in Level 1, and face-to-face contact is still recommended to be avoided whenever possible, this initial stage of the engagement process will use necessary social distancing and other precautions, and, where possible, use internet communication technologies such as zoom, skype, WhatsApp calls, or cellphone communications. In cases where internet or phone communications are not possible, then face-to-face interactions may be considered with the consent of the interviewee, and applying a two-meter social distancing precautionary measure.

For updates on this project and upcoming public meetings please refer to this website: www.Horizons.govt.nz/Anzac-parade. Thank you so much for considering this invitation, and we sincerely hope to hear from you sometime in the very near future.

Martín García Cartagena and Bruce Glavovic
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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 20/37. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz.