

OVERVIEW

A couple of our members sat in on the recent presentation to the Environment Committee by Gregor Macara from NIWA, on Climate Change Projections and Impacts. We were encouraged to see Councillors and Staff are keeping up to date with the latest information in this area.

We wish to refer you to the Executive Summary of the Report on pages 9, 10 & 11. Please note the large range of possibilities for temperature and sea level rises dependent on the different greenhouse gas concentration pathways (RCP's). We wish to stress the importance of not assuming the lowest pathway will happen. All indications up to the present indicate that we are more on track for the medium or even the high pathways and the difference in consequences is large and significant. For example a decrease in mean annual low flow (MALF) could exceed 50% for most of the river systems in the region with increased greenhouse gas concentration and time. With the declining trend in the Wairau Aquifer already clearly evident this added information is cause for concern. Longer periods of low flow will result in further reduced aquifer recharge. We don't need to explain to you how serious the impacts of such an outcome would be for the river and spring fed ecosystems and the Marlborough economy.

We request councillors to always take the “precautionary approach” when making decisions that have the potential to impact the Wairau River and aquifer.

We wish to take this opportunity to remind Council that your entire work program needs to be viewed through a climate - change lens. The NIWA report was a timely reminder of how important this is and will be, as Climate Change impacts, such as extreme weather events and sea level rise, increase. We are encouraged to see in the LTP document the recognition of the importance of building resilience in our local infrastructure to such impacts. We strongly encourage the aim of being proactive when doing infrastructure planning and support the statement – *“Building infrastructure to the latest standards and with the most suitable materials increases resilience to floods, earthquakes and changes in the climate.”*

We support the resourcing for planning and modelling work to assess the likely effects of these impacts and to be better prepared to mitigate them.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN.

In our submission we wish to highlight the question of whether funding allocations within the LTP are adequate to meet commitments previously made by this council when they adopted the Climate Action Plan in March 2020.

We request that you systematically review the LTP, taking a perspective of urgent climate action in the current decade and recognising the need to reduce net GHG emissions by half by 2030.

Richard Coningham has recently supplied us with a progress report on the Climate Change Action Plan. We are encouraged to see steady progress being made on various Actions laid out in the Plan.

- We look forward to seeing a copy of the Report assessing the MDC baseline emissions when it becomes available.
- We note that Action 1(a)(iii) regarding investigating charging stations for vehicles and e-bikes and the use of hybrid and electric vehicles in the Council fleet is tagged as *“yet to be investigated.”*

- Clause 4(c)(i) of the Climate Action Plan states - *“Include assumptions for climate change in the Long Term Plan, including provision for uncertainty, based on latest scientific evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).”*

We ask you to keep this “*provision for uncertainty*” foremost in your minds when finalising the LTP.

- We also wish to bring to your attention an important “Action” in the Climate Action Plan regarding funding. Clause 4(c)(ii) states - *“Incorporate funding provision in the Long Term Plan to implement this Action Plan.”* We note the statement in the LTP document - *“It is not intended to formally consult on the entire programme of infrastructure works, as much of what is included in Council’s capital expenditure budget is regarded as essential to (amongst other things) - Mitigate the potential impacts of climate change;”* It is unclear to us which funding is already allocated in the capital expenditure budget for mitigation purposes and what extra resources may need to be allocated in the LTP to ensure the commitments made in the Action Plan can be met.

We ask you to reassess funding commitments in the Climate Action Plan and ensure adequate resourcing is allocated, if you have not already done so.

THE LONG VIEW

We believe it is critical to keep a long view with all planning decisions. The NIWA report gives you critical information to consider in your decision making. As an example we wish to highlight the recent agenda topic looking at the upgrade of the Town Branch drain, which was discussed at the Assets and Services Committee meeting on January 28th this year. We note in the associated article printed in the Marlborough Express on February 7th that the question of establishing further housing east of the existing town boundary on the E2 land arose during this discussion. This is a very good example of where the long view is essential.

We note the MDC CEO Mark Wheeler is quoted as saying, *“It’s not an easy process and there’s a lot of questions to answer, because there’s a whole raft of issues with that land.”* One of those issues that appears to have not been mentioned in the councillors’ discussion is that of sea level rise. Maybe the belief is that the sea is several kilometres from this area and that therefore there is nothing to be concerned about? The excellent public resource you have now made available online with the new LIDAR maps shows clearly, most of the E2 land is less than 2 metres above sea level. One of our members used to drive a liquid waste truck and has seen what the ground water levels are like in Hardings Rd in the middle of winter where the land is currently only about one metre above sea level. **Ground water levels reach the surface** during wet periods. With sea levels projected to rise by around one metre by 2100 all the E2 land will be in the same boat, so to speak – one metre above sea level. Council will have to provide more pumping stations to keep the area liveable. If worst case scenarios occur we may well have nearly 2 metres of sea level rise by about 2150 according to the NIWA report. We would like to remind you of something Gregor Macara mentioned in his presentation. The possibility of passing currently unknown tipping points in the climate system (that may be irreversible) can not be included in their projections. We have to be smarter with our decision making and think ahead a bit more for our grandchildren’s sake please!

We request Councillors to take the long view when considering development of any further housing east of the existing town boundary.

Thankyou. Budyong Hill for Climate Karanga Marlborough.