

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	Meeting with the Marlborough District Council following the severe weather events
Date	24 August 2022
Briefing number	BRI-2577

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
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Emma Speight	Director Regional Relationships (Greater Wellington and Top of South)	s 9(2)(a)	s 9(2)(a)	✓

Action taken by Office of the Minister

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen by Minister
- ☐ Agreed
- ☐ Feedback provided
- ☐ Forwarded to
- ☐ Needs change [please specify]
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Overtaken by events

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24 August 2022

Hon Kieran McAnulty – Associate Minister of Transport

MEETING WITH THE MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Purpose

1. This briefing informs you ahead of your meeting with the Marlborough District Council on 25 August 2022 to discuss the roading network in Kenepuru/Queen Charlotte and the outer Marlborough Sounds roading network in the aftermath of the recent severe weather events across the region.
2. The Marlborough Mayor John Leggett and Council Chief Executive Mark Wheeler have indicated that they will be proposing a fundamental rethink of the approach to the roads in the Outer Sounds following the recent weather events and recognise that this will be challenging for local residents. It is understood that Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency and the Council will have to be closely aligned to ensure a strong recovery for the region following the severe weather events that have occurred since July 2021.

Background

Severe weather event

3. The recent flooding events in the Marlborough region are expected to have a bigger impact on the roading network than the storm of July 2021.
4. The severe flood damage to the region has forced the closure of the main transport link between Nelson and Marlborough, as well as the closure of many other roads in the region. Initial inspections show that there are major slips, river scour, significant washouts and significant pavement damage, although it will take some time to undertake a full assessment of the damage to the network.
5. In Marlborough, Waka Kotahi has a partnership with Marlborough District Council – Marlborough Roads – through which we deliver our transport services for both the State Highways and local roads in the region. Following the 2021 storm event we established a dedicated team, the Marlborough Roads Recovery Team (MRRT) to manage the recovery and reinstatement of the local roads damaged in that event. Work under the MRRT was scheduled to be completed by mid-2023, with the majority of the remaining work focused on the complex repair sites on Kenepuru Drive.
6. While it is too early to determine the scope of the work required to reopen roads and return them to previous levels of service from the most recent flooding event, it is becoming clear that a substantial amount of work is needed to ensure that roads in the region are safe for use. Waka Kotahi is focused on reinstating access on the state highway network in the first instance – recognising that in the case of SH6, this may involve some single lane sections under traffic light control.

7. Alongside this, our Marlborough Roads team and the MRRT are already working to reinstate road access in multiple locations, including Queen Charlotte Drive. However, our initial visual inspections are indicating that damage across the Marlborough Sounds network is extensive and severe, with damage to almost every part of the network. s 9(2)(g)(i)

The Mayor and Council officers have acknowledged the challenges that the region will face in the years ahead, and that they will need to consider a different approach to previous emergency event responses.

Mayoral Relief Fund

8. Following your visit to the region on 22 August 2022, it was announced that the Government would be contributing an initial \$100,000 to the Mayoral Relief Fund to help with the immediate response. The Mayor was also invited to identify further support that may be required as the region moves into recovering from the recent flooding event.
9. Marlborough Council has indicated that they are likely to identify three waves to recovery that they will be seeking Crown support to deliver. While they have people available in their small Council to support this work, they will need additional expertise and resources to deliver the longer-term work.

Wave 1: Recovery

10. This wave would occur over the coming 12 months, and would focus on:
- a. immediate health, safety and security, including supporting people to leave damaged or red stickered properties
 - b. the provision of interim alternative access, including funding for water taxis and barges, and helicopter access for emergencies
 - c. reinstating key lifelines including power, three waters and roads, where feasible and aligned to the longer-term plan for the Marlborough Sounds.

Wave 2: Planning for an alternative future – “Reimagining the Marlborough Sounds”

11. This wave would occur over the next 6-12 months and would:
- a. encompass economic, social, cultural, and environmental assessments and spatial planning, in partnership with local iwi and communities
 - b. require whole-of-Government involvement, including the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Primary Industries, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health
 - c. potentially identify a future network of barge/jetty and link roads that can be resilient and sustainable over time, as well as future power supply options and building consenting. This would not be the reinstatement of the existing roading network. The final construction of any major infrastructure will take longer and be subject to funding.

Wave 3: Capital funding to transition to the future

12. This would potentially target Budget 2023 once the scale of support and investment is understood.

Next steps

13. It will be worthwhile you exploring each of these waves at the meeting to determine the appropriate next steps in supporting the region to recover from the impacts of the severe weather events.
14. Waka Kotahi will continue to support and work with the Council in restoring the roading network in the region, and in the wider recovery where appropriate.

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the contents of this briefing



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Emma Speight

Director Regional Relationships, Greater Wellington and Top of the South

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Hon Kieran McNulty, Associate Minister of Transport

Date: 2022