

Ngā mahi ā-riu Catchment operations



This group of activities is made up of the following activities:

- Biodiversity and Biosecurity
- Freshwater and Partnerships
- River Management and Flood Protection
- Land Management

WHY WE DELIVER THIS GROUP OF ACTIVITIES

The Catchment Operations Group promotes the health and resilience of the region's land and water ecosystems. It works to ensure an integrated approach to land and river management. This includes biosecurity management for animal and plant pests.

Contribution to Council's strategic priorities

The Catchment Operations Group contributes to Council's strategic priorities, as outlined below:

- 1. Building resilience to the impacts of climate change**
 - The Catchment Operations Groups activity increases resilience to the impacts of climate change through:
 - management of river and drainage schemes to maintain and build new resilience and responding to weather events when they do occur;
 - improving resilience to hill country erosion through the Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI); and
 - managing pest plants and animals and protecting native biodiversity, increasing carbon sequestration and additional resilience of priority native habitats to the impacts of climate change.
- 2. A holistic approach, from the mountains to the sea (integrated catchment management)**

Ngā putanga ā-hapori Our community outcomes



He whakamana hapori, he hapori kori
Our region's communities are vibrant and empowered



He pūnaha hauropi ora
Our region's ecosystems are healthy



He rohe piki te ōhanga, piki te taiao
Our region's economy is thriving and environmentally sustainable

- The combined work programme to manage hill country erosion, undertake work to improve water quality, biodiversity and biosecurity outcomes as well as provide river management, flood protection and drainage activity provides for an integrated catchment management approach.
- 3. Strengthening partnerships with tangata whenua**
- Tangata whenua contribute to our programme and projects by providing governance support, advice, and assisting with operational delivery. Some examples include the work through the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord, Te Pūwaha project, Te Āpiti Governance Group, Jobs for Nature programmes and Lake Horowhenua weed harvesting work.
- 4. Connecting people and place through effective public transport connections**
- The river management, flood protection and drainage activities have a direct impact on other critical infrastructure, including transport links.

Contribution to Council's community outcomes

The Catchment Operations Group primarily contributes to the following community outcomes:

- 1. Our region's communities are vibrant and empowered**
 - Our team provides a range of support and advice to empower landowners and community groups across all parts of the Catchment Operations group.
- 2. Our region's ecosystems are healthy**
 - We work with and support landowners and the community on initiatives to protect and restore ecosystems. This includes freshwater initiatives such as stream fencing, riparian planting, and fish passage improvements, protection of priority habitats, contestable funds for community-led works, and contributions to managing Icon Biodiversity Sites and priority habitats. The programme also manages pest animals and plants and provides grants and advice to enable erosion protection on hill country and river berms.

- 3. Our region's communities are resilient to the impact of natural hazards and climate change**
 - We provide flood and erosion protection and flood response and recovery activity.
 - We provide information and advice about flood risk to support informed decisions.
 - We undertake biodiversity projects to encourage resilience to rising sea levels, help reduce erosion, sequester carbon and improve air quality.
 - We work to reduce sediment in our rivers which will improve the flood-carrying capacity of our rivers and enhance the life of our scheme assets.
 - We help to protect critical infrastructure.
- 4. Our region has effective transport networks**
 - Our flood protection and drainage activities have a direct impact on other critical infrastructure, including transport links.
- 5. Our region's economy is thriving and environmentally sustainable**
 - We support farmers and growers to reduce soil erosion, ensuring our region will maintain its productive soil resource.
 - Our work benefits the region's economic activity derived from flood protection, river control and land drainage activities.
 - Our pest control programmes help protect the region from the economic drain of agricultural disease, improves agricultural production, and assists with management of weed invasion.
 - The work we do at Icon Sites and Totara Reserve Regional Park enhance these natural environments and support recreational activity and ecotourism.

CHALLENGES WE FACE

For more discussion on Council's strategic challenges, see *Ngā tino wero ki mua* | *Council's key challenges in the coming years*, page 9.



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Restoring or maintaining high-priority ecotypes

Due to extensive modification of the region's landscapes since the arrival of people, and the plants and animals they introduced, there has been significant loss and fragmentation of indigenous ecotypes across the region. There is a limited number of sites that represent the previous biodiversity extent in the region and the voluntary Priority Habitats programme is working to find and protect examples of 30 of the ecotypes that are predominately on private land out of the 72 ecotypes regionally.

These sites face a range of challenges from plant and animal pests and require ongoing maintenance which can be resource intensive. Landowner approval to undertake the work is required and in many cases a landowner share of the costs are required. This can be a limitation to including sites into the programme and keeping sites within the programme.

Animal and weed pest invasions

This is a major challenge in being able to protect and improve biodiversity across the region. There is limited resourcing for animal and weed pest management in sites that have difficult topography (making effective pest control difficult), as well as community sensitivity to certain tools like poisons.

Some of the most effective tools for controlling animal and weed pests to preserve endangered ecosystems involves the use of poisons and toxic chemicals which need rigorous testing to be approved for use and can still face significant resistance from communities that feel uncomfortable about the risks.

Biological control options are also investigated and utilised as a part of the programme. Not all biological control agents that are investigated pass the rigorous testing and this can mean investment which doesn't lead to a successful outcome. For those that do pass the testing there is always uncertainty around how effective the agent will be on release and there can be resistance to these being released even after the appropriate testing. This resistance can be in-part due to the history of releases of new mammal species into New Zealand and the damage to biodiversity that has occurred.

Increasing costs / affordability

This is a significant challenge across all our activities. Maintaining existing assets and levels of service requires increases in expenditure. We are facing the same challenge in regards to completing new capital upgrades, on-going maintenance and operation, and appointing contractors. Examples include increasing costs for fencing, pest control, funding of flood protection maintenance, asset upgrades, power, and fuel. Council needs to make difficult decisions about where to prioritise its budget and set achievable targets for levels of service.

Insurance premiums are a part of the programme where costs are increasing due to more frequent and severe events and the increasing replacement value of our assets. Combined, these two factors are challenging the affordability of insuring our assets which total approximately \$1 billion in value.

Our non-regulatory programmes rely on farmers and growers contributing to the cost of erosion control, stream fencing, riparian planting, biodiversity and river protection works. If farmers' finances become constrained through the economic impacts on farm, and/or through increasing regulatory costs, this may reduce the amount of work that can be completed, impacting on the ability to achieve our levels of service targets.

Increasing regulatory complexity

Central government reform has introduced a range of regulations that impact the way we deliver our activities and increase consenting complexity. Responding to this complexity has financial and resourcing implications and costs. The Government's Essential Freshwater package is an example that is shaping a great deal of our work.

The changing regulatory context requires additional staff and other resources, and is driving cost increases within operational activity. Examples of this include dam safety regulations and new requirements for stream fencing and fish passage that form part of new National Freshwater Regulations.

Ngā putanga ā-hapori Our community outcomes



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Increasing demand for staff advice and funding support

We are facing an increased demand to provide advice to landowners around the changing legislation, and to offer other support such as participating in catchment care groups. Further, there are increasing levels of request for new activity such as flood damage repairs and upgrades to, or construction of new, flood protection infrastructure.

The impacts of climate change

Increasing average temperatures, greater fluctuations in weather patterns and rising sea levels will have an effect on the ecosystems in our region. The exact impact on biodiversity and biosecurity are difficult to forecast however there is a high likelihood that climate change will impact on biodiversity and change the nature of biosecurity threats to the region.

Climate change will also have impacts on our land and freshwater systems. Modelling undertaken by Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research for Horizons shows that sediment loads in rivers are predicted to increase by between 40 and 180% by 2090. The modelling predicts that the SLUI programme at its current rate of on-farm works may be insufficient to overcome the impacts of climate change at the most extreme scenarios.

Climate change is likely to change rainfall patterns across the region and will put pressure on our river management, flood protection and drainage schemes. Rising sea levels are also expected, which will place further pressure on our coastal communities. This all has implications for levels of service, scheme operations and maintenance activities.

Climate change is a significant issue for Horizons as a landowner, asset owner and service provider. For example, management of flood risk and damage at Tōtara Reserve Regional Park.

For more discussion on the expected impacts of climate change on our region, see *Āhuarangi Hurihuri | Climate Change*, page 11, and our assumption on climate change in *Ngā Matapae | Forecasting Assumptions*, page 277.

Infrastructure Strategy Key Issues

Horizons River and Drainage Activity includes more than 3,700 assets with a value of approximately \$1 Billion. The Infrastructure Strategy identifies a range of key issues for the management of this infrastructure. These issues relate closely to those the challenges for the Catchment Operations Group outlined above. In summary, the key issues for the infrastructure activity are:

1. Affordability of River Management and Flood Protection Activity;
2. Responding to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters;
3. Delivering capital programme works to increase resilience to climate change impacts;
4. Planning for financial implications of natural hazard events;
5. Maintaining existing assets and understanding our asset condition and maintenance requirements;
6. Achieving environmental, regulatory and other performance expectations; and
7. Merging the River Management and Flood Protection Activity into an integrated catchment management approach.

These issues and potential responses to them are further discussed in the Infrastructure Strategy, page 15.



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Biodiversity and Biosecurity

WHAT WE DO

This activity delivers functions relating to biodiversity and biosecurity (pest animals and plants).

The biodiversity programme functions include:

- Identification and maintenance of priority habitats.
- Supporting Icon biodiversity projects where there is significant community interaction with these sites. The Icon projects are Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge, Kia Wharite in the Ruapehu, Pūkaha Mount Bruce, Bushy Park and Manawatū Estuary.
- Two projects that have been requested by specific communities, and are funded through a rate targeted to those communities. These projects are Rangitikei Old Man's Beard Control, and the Waitāre Community Biodiversity Project.
- Enabling the community to undertake biodiversity projects through support from a contestable biodiversity grants fund.
- Managing the Regional Park at Tōtara Reserve.
- Supporting community engagement and delivering education opportunities to contribute to the protection of biodiversity.

The biosecurity animals programme functions include:

- A Possum Control Programme, with the aim of sustained control.
- A Rook Control Programme, with the aim of eradication of rook breeding in the region.
- An animal pest monitoring programme primarily focussed on possums and including some monitoring of rabbits and surveillance for wallabies.
- A pest animal advisory service for the community.

The biosecurity pest plants programme functions include:

- Implementing the Regional Pest Management Plan which includes 66 species of pest plants. Horizons funds and coordinates pest plant

control across the region for 18 plant species and a further 11 species inside individually managed zones.

- Working in partnership with landowners, community groups and other stakeholders.
- Supporting biological control options for a range of pest plants.
- A pest plant advisory service for ratepayers.

WHY WE DO IT

The biodiversity and biosecurity activity seeks to enhance regional biodiversity and provide support for management of some production pests.

Biodiversity decline over time has been well documented and the biodiversity programme includes work to identify and protect priority habitats that represent the region's biodiversity with a focus on the ecotypes that are predominately on private land.

The Biodiversity Partnerships programme has a goal of "*Empowering communities to reconnect with and improve biodiversity*". This includes support of the Icon sites and Tōtara Reserve Regional Park where there is high levels of public connection with biodiversity, projects where the community have requested support and are funding the activity by targeted rates, and the contestable fund where the community can put forward their priorities for biodiversity activity.

A significant component of the biosecurity programme also supports the regional economy through management of pests that can impact on production e.g. possums, rooks and some pest plants.

KEY PROJECTS

Implementation of and Review of Regional Pest Management Plan

Council has a pest management plan which we follow to control and manage pests (animals and plants) in our region. Under the Biosecurity Act 1993 there is a statutory requirement to draft a revised plan by November

Ngā putanga ā-hapori Our community outcomes



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2027. This work will occur throughout years 1-3 of the Long-Term Plan at a forecasted total cost of \$650k plus staff time. This is planned to be reserve funded in year 1, with additional rate funding from year 2.

Possum Control Operation

Horizons voluntary possum control programme seeks to provide positive outcomes for production, animal health, biodiversity and amenity. The programme covers over 1.568 Million hectares or about 70% of the region. In the 2023-24 year the programme aims to deliver control over more than 900,000 ha with a target of over 110,000 bait station fills. The region-wide programme is under pressure with some areas of the programme showing results over the goal of 10% Residual Trap Catch. The pressure on the programme to undertake further control is forecast to increase over the life of the Long-term Plan with land OSPRI likely to cease controlling some areas and these areas becoming part of Horizons programme. There is also a positive trend of more landowners wanting to opt into the programme that is increasing the number of bait stations in the region. Land use change in the region including more forestry is also changing the intensity of work required in some areas. The programme which is currently predominately a ground operation approach may adapt to include aerial control for some land parcels to increase efficiency. The Long-term Plan provides for increasing control efforts in year 2 and year 3. This work will occur throughout years 1-10 of the Long-Term Plan at a forecasted cost of \$4.4M, with a year 2 boost of \$150k and a further \$250k in year 3.

Pest Plant Management

Implementing the Regional Pest Management Plan which includes 66 species of pest plants. Horizons funds and coordinates pest plant control across the region for 18 plant species and a further 11 species inside individually managed zones. Not all of the objectives for the pest plan are currently on track to be met. Analysis has shown the nine species are considered to have a low likelihood of meeting the objectives - Old man's beard, Purple Loosestrife, Chinese pennisetium, evergreen buckthorn and five aquatic weeds).

The Long-term Plan is provisioning some funding, primarily in year two to enhance the likelihood to achieve some of the pest plan objectives. A total of \$95K of additional funding has been provisioned in year two for additional control of Wilding conifers, Bone seed, Darwin's barberry, Banana Passionfruit and evergreen buckthorn. The Long-term Plan also includes increases of \$100,000 in each of year 2 and year 3 for further old man's beard control. The additional support will enhance the ability of the pest plant programme to achieve some goals.

CHANGES IN WHAT WE WILL DELIVER

As outlined below there are few changes to the structure of what we deliver for the biosecurity and biodiversity projects. The Long-term Plan proposes little change to biodiversity and biosecurity operational budgets in year 1. Some increases in activity are proposed in year 2 and 3 to enhance the ability to achieve goals and objectives for this activity. The proposed increases in activity and budgets for these are outlined in the section above. There is an increase in capital programme spending proposed for Tōtara Reserve, with some of this receiving co-funding from Central Government.

Improvements to Priority Habitats

Council's goal for the priority habitats programme is "to maintain or restore the full range of the region's priority indigenous ecosystems to a healthy and functioning level". Overall 72 ecotypes have been identified in the region and Horizons has priorities on 30 of these that are predominately on private land with the balance to be managed by other agencies such as the Department of Conservation. Horizons currently has 83 sites in the programme representing 27 of the priority habitats, with more being added in 2023-24 year. Over the first three years of the Long-term Plan we aim to bring examples of the remaining three priority ecotypes into the programme and we have included additional funding to improve the on-going management of the more than 83 existing sites in the programme. Budgets for the project are forecasted cost of \$360K for year one (similar to 2023-24 levels), increasing to approximately \$810k per annum by year 3.



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Kanorau Koiora Taketake

Our Kanorau Koiora Taketake - Indigenous Biodiversity Community grants provide funding and advice to community groups who are helping to make this region a healthy environment where people are thriving. The vision for is to 'empower communities to reconnect with and improve biodiversity'. The programme has supported over 65 projects since its initiation in 2021. This work will occur throughout years 1-10 of the Long-Term Plan at a forecasted average cost of \$307k per year.

Support for Icon biodiversity sites and targeted rate projects

Horizons provides support to five Icon site projects and two targeted rate projects. The Icon sites are Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge, Kia wharite predator control, Bushy Park, Pūkaha Mt Bruce and Manawatū Estuary. The two target rate projects are the Rangitīkei old man's beard control work and the Waitarere Community Biodiversity project. This work will occur throughout years 1-10 of the Long-Term Plan at a forecasted average cost of \$1,050k per year. Funding for the Waitarere Community Biodiversity project has been increased from historic level of approximately 7k to 20k (including GST) and the area of the target rate applies to have been increased. This change is to provide for more activity as part of the project.

Totara Reserve Regional Park Ongoing Management

Totara reserve is classified a 'Scenic Reserve' under the Reserves Act 1977 and is the Region's only Regional Park. Activity at the Reserve includes the management of camping and the broader park activity including protecting biodiversity and biosecurity. The site has been significantly impacted by flooding on a number of occasions over the last 20 years. Government Co-funding has been secured to assist with establishing further flood protection at the site and is supported by an additional \$200k in year 1. As part of the ongoing Reserve management, the Long-term Plan has provisioned for some additional biosecurity/biodiversity work at a cost of \$120k over years 1-3; as well as a toilet replacement for the Fern walk, an effluent treatment component upgrade, and new ablution block. These capital works are planned to occur throughout years 1 – 3 of the Long-Term Plan at a forecasted estimated cost of \$370,000.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THIS ACTIVITY

Impacts on the environment

Much of the activity is dedicated to working with others to improve environmental outcomes. However, some aspects of the work can have, or be perceived to have, negative impacts on the environment.

Examples of this include the potential climate change impact through activities like travel to work locations, constructing fences, flood defences etc. Further, as a part of delivering pest control activity for environmental and economic benefit a range of toxins are utilised. In part, some of this impact will be offset by the significant amount of planting and pest control that is undertaken which will have a positive impact on carbon sequestration.

Other environmental impacts can occur in delivering services for human activity in natural environments. For example, the establishment of tracks in the Tōtara reserve may require some modification to the native bush.

Impacts on People

Ecological enhancement activities are undertaken to provide overall benefits for the community. In some cases, the provision of these services can have impacts on some of the community through changing their local area, impacting on their properties, cultural values etc.

HOW WE WILL FUND THIS ACTIVITY

This activity has been divided into four sub-activities for funding, following an assessment of most appropriate funding sources. This provides transparency and accountability in relation to costs and benefits.

Biodiversity and biosecurity - implementation

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder:

- 55% General Rate
- 30% UAC (Environmental Initiatives)
- 15% targeted per ha rate on properties >4 ha

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Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this service comes from habitat loss and introduced pest species as a result of the actions of current and previous generations.

There are both regional and local benefits to this activity. Benefits from improved biodiversity and ecosystem health occur in the ecological districts where those improvements are made, both in the present and the future. However, this has broader benefits to the region and the nation. A component of biosecurity protection also protects the rural economy and rural landowners.

Note: The implementation of the Regional Pest Management Plan is funded via the *Biodiversity and Biosecurity – Implementation* activity in accordance with consideration given under section 100T of the Biosecurity Act 1993. The Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) and the Biodiversity and Biosecurity – Implementation activity generally have the same purpose regarding the protection of our region's unique biodiversity and ecological systems. The funding structure of the Biodiversity and Biosecurity – Implementation activity generally reflects the RPMP's intended benefits (both direct and indirect), and interests, of the occupiers of affected properties across the region.

Regional park camp ground (component of Tōtara reserve regional park management)

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder:

- >30% fees and charges

Remainder:

- 90% Targeted UAC (Palmerston North City Council area and Manawātū District)
- 10% General rate.

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

This service is provided to assist us in achieving our community outcomes.

The regional park campground largely benefits residents in the surrounding district and city. The initial source of funds are camping fees, with the bulk of the remainder targeted to Palmerston North City and Manawātū District.

Rangitīkei environment group old mans' beard control

Funding arrangements

- 50% UAC (properties >4 ha in the Rangitīkei District)
- 50% UAC (properties <4 ha in the Rangitīkei District)

Rationale
Need for this service comes from introduced pest species as a result of the actions of previous generations.

For the purposes of funding this activity, the properties in the Rangitīkei District have been divided into those that are less than four hectares (<4ha), and those that are more than four hectares (>4ha). Council assumes that the >4ha properties generally receive greater benefit from the Old Mans' Beard control improvements than <4ha properties. The >4ha properties pay more per property to reflect the greater benefit.

Waitārere community biodiversity project

Funding arrangements

- Grants and Subsidies in the first instance

Remainder

- 100% targeted (Waitārere Community) based on capital value. Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this service comes from habitat loss and introduced pest species as a result of the actions of current and previous generations.

This service benefits those in the Waitārere Beach community. The recovery of costs for the service are targeted to that community.



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PERFORMANCE TARGETS

As a part of the Long-term Plan process Council have reviewed the performance targets for the biosecurity and biodiversity activity. In summary the changes include:

- The Priority Habitats programme moving the focus from a single target adding new sites each year to having two new measures, one aligned to the goal of having a representative set of priority ecotypes in the programme and a second focussed on providing maintenance of the sites in the programme.
- The previous Community Biodiversity target to support 10 community projects has been separated into two measures, one for the known Icon and targeted Rate projects and one for the contestable fund projects that are decided on each year. Overall the two measures the target has increased to supporting at least 19 projects.
- The possum control programme measures have refined to reflect more clearly that they are measured based on the annual monitoring results. To support this a new measure for the minimum amount of annual monitoring required has been added.
- Pest Plant measures have been broadened to provide a measure of all species that Horizons manage and measure seeking an overall improving trend. A further measure has been added to provide a detailed annual report containing information on each of the individual species. This measure aligns with a mandatory requirement under the Biosecurity Act.

BIODIVERSITY							
Levels of service and performance measures		Performance Measure/Target					
		Baseline	Actual 22/23	24/25 Target	25/26 Target	26/27 Target	Years 4-10 Target
1. Protection of priority representative sites of the region's biodiversity							
1.1	At least one representative site of each of the 30 ⁴⁷ known and priority ecosystem types in the region are found and protected in the priority habitats active management programme	2022/23	81% [27 of 33]	>90%	>93%	>96%	>100%
1.2	The number of sites in the priority habitats programme is sustained or increased	Baseline for modified measure 2024/25	N/A	>80	>80	>80	>80

⁴⁷ Explanatory note: There are 72 ecosystem types currently identified in the Horizons region (Singers and Rogers classification). Thirty four of these are under-represented, threatened and not already found on private conservation land in the region. Four of these are ecosystem types that are impractical to manage (ie. cliff faces and braided riverbeds) leaving 30 priority ecosystem types that should be found and protected by Horizons.

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2. We support biodiversity protection and improvement projects at identified biodiversity icon sites and specified targeted rate projects							
2.1	Support Icon and target rate biodiversity projects.	Baseline year for split measure – 2023/24	N/A	7	7	7	7
3. We support communities to manage their own biodiversity improvement projects							
3.1	Private individuals, organisations and community groups are supported and enabled to improve and protect biodiversity across the region.	Baseline year for split measure – 2023/24	N/A	>12	>12	>12	>12
4. We manage Tōtara Reserve Regional Park, including the campground							
4.1	Annual report to Council on the management of Totara Reserve Regional Park for biodiversity and recreational values, including managing the camping facility.	2022/23	Achieved	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
BIOSECURITY – PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT							
5. Horizons will undertake targeted animal pest control and monitoring programmes across the Region to reduce adverse effects on economic wellbeing and the environment							
5.1	Possum densities are maintained at/below 10% residual trap-catch, (on average), across the Possum Control Operations monitored annually.	2022/23	Achieved	<10%	<10%	<10%	<10%
5.2	Monitor possum control densities within the Horizons possum control programme based on the possum control operations that make up the overall possum control area	Baseline year for modified measure – 2023/24	N/A	>20% of Possum Control Operations monitored	>20% of Possum Control Operations monitored	>20% of Possum Control Operations monitored	>20% of Possum Control Operations monitored each year
5.3	All additional hectares released from OSPRI control are included in the PCO programme	2023/24	N/A - No new hectares this year.	100%	100%	100%	100%



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5.4	All known rookeries are treated annually to reduce crop losses and damage.	2022/23	100%	95%	95%	95%	95%
5.5	Provide an animal pest management advisory service. All enquiries will be responded to within three working days	2022/23	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BIOSECURITY – PEST PLANT MANAGEMENT							
6. We prevent establishment of high risk pest plant species							
6.1	Response plans are enacted within their specified timeframes.	Baseline year for modified measure – 2023/24	N/A – No plans required	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
7. We effectively reduce the risk of pest plants spreading from sites Horizons manages within Regional Pest Management Plan programmes.							
7.1	The overall zero-level status of Horizons managed sites increases on a yearly basis.	Baseline year for modified measure – 2022/23	86%	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
8. We contribute to the management of widespread pest plant species using natural methods							
8.1	Financially support the national bio-control agent development programme and report annually to Council on this programme and Horizons other biocontrol activity.	2022/23	Achieved	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
9. We monitor our RPMP programmes according to the Biosecurity Act requirements							
9.1	Submit an annual monitoring report	2023/24	N/A	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve

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Freshwater and Partnerships

WHAT WE DO

The primary functions of the freshwater and partnerships team are to work with external partners to result in improvements in aquatic habitat (fish passage and riparian management) and water quality (including stream fencing, riparian planting, advice on constructed wetlands and other interventions). The programme also enables community projects (through funding and advice) and provides advice, support and raises awareness of rules and regulations.

The activities are focussed on working with landowners and the community. This includes coordinating the Manawātū River Leaders' Forum and the provision of advice and grants to co-funding intervention works that either result in improvement in overall aquatic health (including water quality) or greater community involvement in freshwater.

The programme has a strong linkages to Horizons science and monitoring activity to inform decisions on interventions in the context of the identified issues within the catchment of work. Parts of the programme will assist in the development of action plans required to be prepared under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 for some of the region's river and/or lakes. The activity also has a role in supporting overall operational activity, enhancing the delivery of an integrated catchment management approach including providing support to the river management and flood protection activity.

WHY WE DO IT

Our projects and partnerships are undertaken to improve water quality and aquatic habitats in the region. This includes providing support to community and landowners to develop options for and to undertake works.

KEY PROJECTS

Jobs for Nature projects – Riparian management and Fish Passage

The Freshwater and Partnerships programme has been successful in obtaining a range of government co-funding over the last decade.

Two of the programmes, the Regional Riparian Fencing and Planting project and the Enhancing Fish Populations through fish passage remediation project are funded via the Jobs for Nature programme that is administered by the Ministry for the Environment. These projects were originally programme to end in June 2023. These are now continuing into year 1 of the Long-term Plan via an extensions to the five year contract timeframes.

The extension of the programmes will be funded by a carry forward of government co-funding and rates from previous years. Overall the cessation of the Jobs for Nature funding (including the Horowhenua project below) will reduce the overall funding for the Freshwater and Partnerships activity by \$2.8 million. This includes a reduction of 6 staff positions.

Jobs for Nature project - Horowhenua

The Horowhenua Freshwater Management Unit Water Quality interventions project is a further project with co-funding from Jobs for Nature Fund via the Ministry for the Environment. The work has objectives that include governance, monitoring and science, job creation, communications and the establishment of the Arawhata Wetland. This project was contracted to be completed in year 1 of the new Long-term Plan (by 2024). This project will focus on obtaining permissions and construction of phase 1 of the wetland in year 1 and moves to a maintenance programme from year 2. The second phase of the wetland has not been provisioned for in the Long-term Plan.

Regional Water Quality Improvement

This project seeks to improve the swimmability and aquatic habitat of the region's rivers through riparian planting and the exclusion of stock from the



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region's rivers and stream margins. The programme also supports restoration of native fish populations through improving fish passage and supports community projects to enhance water quality. This work will occur throughout years 1 - 10 of the Long-Term Plan at a forecasted cost of \$11.0 million. The overall amount of work completed will be substantially reduced due to the reduction of central government co-funding. In year 1 the activity will include the remainder of the Jobs for Nature projects for riparian fencing and planting and enhancing fish passage and will likely increase the level of delivery compared the targets in year 1 of the Long-term Plan.

Council funded a regional freshwater community grants programme via use of \$100,000 of reserves in 2023-24. This approach is planned to continue in year 1 of the Long-term Plan. The Long-term Plan includes additional rate funding of \$100,000 to continue this programme.

Manawatū River Water Quality Improvement

The Manawatū River Water Quality Enhancement programme supports the delivery of projects to meet the goals of the Manawatū River Leaders Accord that was established in 2010. It is funded via a targeted rate to the ratepayers within the Manawatū Catchment. With the completion of the central government co-funding from Freshwater Improvement Fund in June 2023, the targeted rate has been a part of the Jobs for Nature Project for regional fencing and planting in 2023-24. The Long-term Plan now separates this work back out from the regional programme. This project faces a significant reduction in the level of service due to a reduction in external funding from central government.

The work programme includes support for the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum meetings, riparian fencing and planting, fish passage remediation and community projects. This is an ongoing project, that will be delivered throughout the life of this Long-Term Plan via the Manawatū Accord targeted rate, at a forecasted cost of \$450,000 annually.

Horowhenua District Water Quality Improvement

The Horowhenua District Water Quality Enhancement programme supports the delivery of water quality and freshwater enhancement projects in the Horowhenua District. It is funded via a target rate to the Horowhenua District

(previously referred to as the Lake Horowhenua Restoration Rate). In recent years the programme has supported Lake Horowhenua Weed Harvesting and the Jobs for Nature project that is completing work within the Horowhenua District including the design, consenting and construction of the Arawhata wetland.

The LTP work programme includes continued support for the Lake Weed Harvesting operation and in year 1 the wetland construction. An additional provision of \$100,000 in year 2 and further \$100,000 in year 3 have been provisioned for ongoing maintenance of the wetland. This is an ongoing project, that will be delivered throughout the life of this Long-term Plan at a forecasted cost of \$9.8 million.

CHANGES IN WHAT WE WILL DELIVER

Over the past decade the freshwater and partnerships programme has been successful in obtaining government co-funding for a range of projects to enhance the level of delivery. In the previous Long-term Plan this increase in size and scale of activity included the Freshwater Improvement Fund, Community Environment Fund and Jobs for Nature projects. As a result of the government co-funding coming to an end, there will be a significant reduction in the level of service in these programmes during this Long-term Plan. While there will likely be some additional work in year 1 of the LTP due to funding carried forward. Overall the programme is reducing by a total of \$2.8 million and 6 staff.

Additional resourcing of \$200k is being allocated to the Horowhenua District Water Quality Improvement programme provide for the operation, maintenance of the Arawhata wetland complex.

The Freshwater and Partnership team will work to deliver the Jobs for Nature work in year 1 and will provide support for the Integrated Catchment Management work programme over the life of the Long-term Plan. A key part of that will be increasing the alignment of the activity of the Catchment Operations Group and support for the River Management, Flood protection and Drainage team. This includes delivery of the Nature Based Solutions funded work to investigate a 'room for the river' approach in the Pohangina/Ōroua and part of the lower Manawatū River. More information on

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this project is provided in the Infrastructure Strategy. The new government co-funding will partially offset the reduction in government co-funding from other programmes but is not directed to co-funding physical works like fencing and planting.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THIS ACTIVITY

Impacts on the environment

Much of the activity is dedicated to working with others to improve environmental outcomes. However, some aspects of the work can have, or be perceived to have, negative impacts on the environment.

Examples of this include the potential climate change impact through activities like travel to work locations, constructing fences, flood defences etc. In part some of this impact will be offset by the significant amount of planting and pest control that is undertaken which will have a positive impact on carbon sequestration.

Other environmental impacts can occur in delivering services for human activity in natural environments. For example, building a wetland to assist in restoring Lake Horowhenua may require earthworks in wetland areas.

Impacts on People

Ecological enhancement activities are undertaken to provide overall benefits for the community. In some cases, the provision of these services can have impacts on some of the community through changing their local area, impacting on their properties, cultural values etc.

HOW WE WILL FUND THIS ACTIVITY

This activity has been divided into three sub-activities for funding, following an assessment of most appropriate funding sources. This provides transparency and accountability in relation to costs and benefits.

Freshwater and partnerships regional implementation

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder

- 100% General Rate

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

Water quality outcomes are the result of local catchment characteristics and what happens in the catchment. Land use, discharges and water takes contribute to water quality outcomes. Extreme weather events and climate change also contribute.

The benefits of this service are region-wide and intergenerational.

Manawatū catchment water quality improvement

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder:

- 100% UAC (properties in the Manawatū Catchment).

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

Water quality outcomes are the result of local catchment characteristics and what happens in the catchment. Land use, discharges and water takes contribute to water quality and ecological health outcomes. Extreme weather events and climate change also contribute.

This service benefits those in the Manawatū Catchment area. The recovery of costs for the service are targeted to properties in the Manawatū Catchment.

Horowhenua District water quality improvement

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies (in the first instance).



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Remainder:

- 100% targeted (properties in the Horowhenua District) based on capital value.

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

Water quality outcomes are the result of local catchment characteristics and what happens in the area. Land use, discharges and water takes contribute to water quality and ecological health outcomes. Extreme weather events and climate change also contribute.

This service benefits residents within the Horowhenua District. The recovery of costs for the service are targeted to properties in the Horowhenua District.

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PERFORMANCE TARGETS

The performance targets for the Freshwater and Partnerships activity have been reviewed to reflect the cessation of the Jobs for Nature project and are arranged in the three sections for the Regional, Manawatū and Horowhenua Water Quality Improvement programmes. The overall levels of service across these activities are programmed to reduce significantly as outlined below.

- Stream fencing targets will reduce from 160 km in the 2023-24 Annual Plan to 30 km in year 1 of the Long-term Plan
- Riparian planting targets will reduce from 140,000 plants to 70,000 plants
- Fish passage repair targets will reduce from 7 to 4
- Community projects will increase from 0 to 10

FRESHWATER AND PARTNERSHIPS							
Levels of service and performance measures		Performance Measure/Target					
		Baseline	Actual 22/23	24/25 Target	25/26 Target	26/27 Target	Years 4-10 Target
1. Deliver freshwater enhancement work in the Region							
1.1	Kilometres (km) of stream fencing completed	2023/24	40km	15 km	15 km	15 km	15 km per year
1.2	Number of riparian plants planted.	2023/24	77,817	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000 per year
1.3	Fish barriers remediated	2023/24	3	2	2	2	2 per year
1.4	Number of regional community projects funded.	0 [Annual Plan states zero, but a fund has been run with reserves]	9	5	5	5	5 per year
2. Deliver freshwater enhancement work within the Manawatū Catchment							
2.1	Manawatū Accord Leaders forums are held twice per year.	2023/24	N/A	2	2	2	2 per year



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2.2	Kilometres (km) of stream fencing completed.	0 [All funding to Regional Jobs for Nature projects in 2023/24]	2024/25	15 km	15 km	15 km	15 km per year
2.3	Number of riparian plants planted.	0 [All funding to Regional Jobs for Nature projects in 2023/24]	2024/25	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000 per year
2.4	Fish barriers remediated	0 [All funding to Regional Jobs for Nature projects in 2023/24]	2024/25	2	2	2	2 per year
2.5	Number of community projects funded	0 [All funding to Regional Jobs for Nature projects in 2023/24]	2024/25	5	5	5	5 per year
3. Deliver freshwater enhancement work within the Horowhenua District							
3.1	Annual report to Council on Horowhenua Freshwater restoration activity	2022/23	Achieved	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	1 per year Achieved

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River management and flood protection

WHAT WE DO

Horizons River Management and Flood Protection Activity provides a range of services to protect people and property from weather events and to support the regional economy. The activity is primarily delivered through the 34 River and Drainage Schemes which have developed over time since the 1940's. The levels of service and activities vary between and within the schemes. The main work types include:

- Flood protection of city, towns, houses, infrastructure and rural land;
- Erosion control, channel maintenance and gravel management;
- Vegetation planting and management;
- Drainage activity; and
- Amenity and environmental enhancement works

Across the schemes there were 3,794 assets with a total estimated value in the order of \$990 million in June 2023. These assets include approximately 500 km of stop banks, over 509 floodgates, over 800 km of river channel and over 1070 km of drains. A large component of the work programme is focussed on maintaining and repairing these assets. The programme also includes a capital upgrade programme to increase levels of service and activity to respond to and recover from storm events. The investigation and design aspect of the activity provides technical design and advice, produces gravel resources studies and also support works outside of schemes, via environmental grants.

WHY WE DO IT

Horizons River Management Activity is one of Council's statutory functions. Relevant statutes include the Soil Conservation and River Control Act 1941, the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, and some Orders in Council relating to performance of Catchment Board and Drainage functions.

Horizons River Management, Flood Protection and Drainage Activity aims to protect people and property from weather events and to support the regional economy. This includes building resilience to the impacts of climate change in the region.

KEY PROJECTS

Scheme Maintenance & Operational Delivery

A core function of the River Management and Flood protection activity is the maintenance programme for the 23 River Schemes and 11 Drainage Schemes.

The Long-term Plan sets out new performance measures to provide a greater level of certainty and transparency around the way scheme maintenance will be undertaken. Scheme maintenance targets have been set at a regional level across the schemes using a common methodology. This includes targets like all scheme drains will be maintained at least once every 10 years and 2% of the channels within the scheme areas will be maintained each year. These measures aim to set out the level of activity that has been funded and provide transparent reporting on the amount of activity that has been achieved.

This maintenance based programme will be informed by the asset management programme outlined below. The move to this approach places a focus on maintaining existing assets within the programme to increase resilience to storm events. The programme maintains some budget provision for damage repairs and a limited budget for new assets to establish in scheme where damage occurs and there is not currently an asset.

This approach will change the way activity is delivered in some schemes. The aims of the maintenance based approach include to reduce the amount of damage to assets during storm events through preventative maintenance, increasing transparency around the levels of service and increasing the efficiency of the delivery of the programme through a more structured



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programmed. This activity is programmed to occur over the life of the Long-term Plan. Over the course of the Long-term Plan increases of \$250,000 in year 1 and year 3 have been included to enable the delivery of the Long-term Plan targets. Further two new staff positions have been included in year 2 of the programme to provide increased staff capacity for delivery.

Capital Programme Delivery

The capital programme has two components, the asset renewals programme as outlined in the Asset Management Plan and the capital upgrade programme to maintain and/or increase the levels of service. More information on both of these programmes is available in the Infrastructure Strategy.

Horizons' Capital Upgrade programme over the Long-term Plan is currently supported by a range of central government co-funding, including:

- Provincial Growth Funding for the Te Pūwaha project at the mouth of the Whanganui River which is being budgeted to deliver the Tanae Groyne construction in year 1 of the LTP and South Spit resilience upgrades in Year 2 of the LTP. Council has not provided for the upgrade of the South Mole that had an estimated budget of \$9.2 million in March 2023.
- Climate resilience funding for the Lower Manawatū, Palmerston North, Rangitikei and Foxton projects. A range of sub-projects are planned within these projects in year 1 including:
 - The Lower Manawatū Project upgrades to the Moutoa Flood Gates at both ends of the spillway, Rangiotu Floodgates and Tokomaru stop banks.
 - The Palmerston North stop banks projects to build resilience to flood protection the Mangaone Stream near Tremaine Avenue.
 - The Foxton project to establish improved flood protection; and
 - The Rangitikei project to further implement the room for river management approach.
- The Local Government Flood Resilience Fund projects for
 - Flood forecasting and communication resilience upgrades which has a range of projects including flood forecasting,

communications and back-up power supply upgrades and completion of flood vulnerability assessment programmed for year 1 of the Long-term Plan; and

- The Pohangina Catchment project to reduce the risk to people and infrastructure which has a work programme to establish improved flood protection at Tōtara Reserve in year 1 of the LTP.

Other capital programmes planned in the first ten years of the Long-term Plan include:

- Further work to design, consent and complete upgrades to flood protection for Feilding township;
- Plans to determine and implement a solution to the flood risk at Te Arakuru Road downstream of Feilding township on the Ōroua River; and
- Further work to build resilience in the Mangaone Stream in Palmerston North.

Longer term capital upgrade projects are further discussed in the Infrastructure Strategy.

The funding for the capital programme in year 1 of the LTP is \$15.2M being an increase to the 2023-24 Annual Plan budget for this activity (\$13.5M). After year 1 of the LTP the amount provisioned for upgrades reduces as the government co-funding reduces and over the first 10 years of the programme the budget is approximately \$36.5M. From year three, there is a focus on projects in Feilding, Palmerston North and the capital renewals programme. The Long-term Plan includes budget to transition staff salaries currently being funded by capital costs to being funded by operational budget annual. An allowance of \$390,000 in year 2 and \$140,000 in year 3 has been included for this.

CHANGES IN WHAT WE WILL DELIVER

A range of changes to delivery of the River Management and Flood protection are proposed. These are overviewed in the section above and sections below.

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Responding to and recovering from weather events

Staff time and resources to respond to weather events are provisioned in the Long-term Plan as a part of Horizons Emergency Management function. River and Drainage Scheme budgets also supporting responding to events, including additional inspections, enquiry responses and a limited budget for repairs. Response to weather events is prioritised over activity. During years where there are large and/or frequent events, the response to and recovery from weather events can impact on the delivery of the planned work programme. The 2023-24 year has been a good example of this with a range of weather events in the region causing flood damage, including Cyclone Gabrielle. This required staff resources to be diverted from planned work to response and recovery activity.

Asset Management

Of the 34 schemes, 28 schemes have assets. Within the 28 schemes there are approximately 3,700 assets. Knowledge of the condition of the over 3,700 assets is important to prioritising the maintenance programme, managing risks to providing the levels of service and assessing asset values for auditing and insurance purposes. Five performance targets have been included in the Long-term Plan for the asset management activity. These include targets for asset inspections and providing Annual reports on Asset Condition and Asset Revaluations to Council.

The Long-term Plan includes provision for two new staff positions to assist with the implementation of the infrastructure strategy and asset management programme.

Delivering on regulatory requirements

The River Management, Flood Protection and Drainage work of Horizons requires a range of regulatory and other permissions. The number of these and complexity is growing due to community expectations changing, consents expiring and requiring replacing, new central government legislation coming into effect and councils (including Horizons) reviewing their policies.

New Dam Safety Legislation is one example of new legislation that will add to the costs of scheme activity. Currently, it is estimated that 14 dam safety assurance programmes have to be developed over the first two years of the Long-term Plan to meet regulatory requirements within timeframes. This work is planned to be loan funded over the lifespan of these reports (five years) with the costs to be met by the schemes the dams are in. Funding for this has not been provisioned in the Long-term Plan at this stage, while the required amount and likely timing of the spend and funding model is confirmed.

Design and advice activity

Design and advice activity includes:

- Undertaking gravel resource assessments in a programme coordinated with the Fluvial Research Programme.
- Developing a regional flood vulnerability assessment with support from Central Government co-funding via the Local Government Flood Resilience Fund.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THIS ACTIVITY

Impacts on the environment

Much of the activity is dedicated to working with others to provide services like flood protection and drainage services. However, some aspects of the work can have, or be perceived to have, negative impacts on the environment.

Examples of this include the potential climate change impact through activities like travel to work locations, constructing fences, flood defences etc. In part some of this impact will be offset by the significant amount of planting and pest control that is undertaken which will have a positive impact on carbon sequestration.

Other environmental impacts can occur in delivering services for human activity in natural environments. For example, work to establish flood protection assets like stop banks or to protect assets from flood damage may require in-river works that have potential to impact ecosystems and natural character as well as people's enjoyment of waterways.



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Impacts on People

Ecological enhancement and flood protection type activities are undertaken to provide overall benefits for the community. In some cases, the provision of these services can have impacts on some of the community through changing their local area, impacting on their properties, cultural values etc. For example, in some cases providing flood protection can have positive impacts for a large part of the community, through having additional impacts on other areas in the community.

HOW WE WILL FUND THIS ACTIVITY

This activity has been divided into five sub-activities for funding, following an assessment of most appropriate funding sources. This provides transparency and accountability in relation to costs and benefits.

River and drainage – general

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance

Remainder:

- 100% General Rate

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this service comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.

Benefits accrue to the whole region – this service protects the lives and property of people within the region.

River and drainage – river schemes (excluding Pohangina-Oroua and Porewa)

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder:

- 80% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model, including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges)
- 20% General Rate.

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this service comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.

Benefits primarily accrue to the populations and properties that each river scheme protects, over the lifetime of those scheme assets. A mechanism for distributing costs in relation to benefits for this targeted rating has been determined through the use of differentials.

There is also some broader benefit to the whole region from the schemes contributing to a functional regional economy, and some broader national benefit for the same reason.

River and drainage – drainage schemes

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder:

- 90% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model, including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges)
- 10% General Rate.

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this service comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.

Benefits primarily accrue to the populations and properties that each drainage scheme protects, over the lifetime of those scheme assets. A

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mechanism for distributing costs in relation to benefits for this targeted rating has been determined through the use of differentials.

There is also some broader benefit to the whole region from the schemes contributing to a functional regional economy, and some broader national benefit for the same reason.

River and drainage - Porewa scheme

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder:

- 60% General Rate
- 40% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model, including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges)

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this service comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.

This scheme provides regional and national benefit through the reduction of flooding risk to State Highway 1 and the Southern North Island Main Trunk Railway. Flood protection enables distribution of goods on these significant corridors as well as productive use of the land.

The properties in the Porewa valley also directly benefit because the land is protected by flood and erosion control works.

RIVER AND DRAINAGE: POHANGINA-OROUA SCHEME

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance (including 60% landowner contribution to erosion control works).

Remainder:

- 20% General Rate
- 80% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model, including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges).

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this service comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.

Benefits primarily accrue to the populations and properties that the river and drainage scheme protects, over the lifetime of those scheme assets. A mechanism for distributing costs in relation to benefits for this targeted rating has been determined through the use of differentials.

There is also some broader benefit to the whole region from the schemes contributing to a functional regional economy, and some broader national benefit for the same reason.



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PERFORMANCE TARGETS

As a part of the Long-term Plan process, Council are implementing changes to the delivery of the River Management and Flood Protection Activity including establishing a new set of performance measures to increase the level of transparency around activity. The new levels of service include:

- Six measures for the Scheme Maintenance and Operational delivery. These outline the amount of work that will be completed as a proportion of the total amount of assets and include measures for maintenance of drains, stop banks, river channels, erosion control vegetation, flood gates and amenity assets.
- Six measures for asset management including inspection number targets and annual reporting to Council on Asset Condition and Asset Revaluations.
- A revised target for delivery of the Capital Programme that reflects the uncertainty around the ability to deliver all planned projects in a given year.
- Measures for reporting on regulatory requirements, damage from severe weather events, gravel management reports, environmental grants and the room for the river projects.

RIVER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD PROTECTION							
Levels of service and performance measures		Performance Measure/Target					
		Baseline	Actual 22/23	24/25 Target	25/26 Target	26/27 Target	Years 4-10 Target
1. We will undertake maintenance within the River and Drainage schemes							
1.1	Maintenance is undertaken on scheme drains (note a drain may receive maintenance more than once per year and each maintenance activity counts to the target) [Numbers in the targets for this measure and others below should be treated as indicative. These measures rely on sufficient staffing and a business model that enables delivery as well as a new tracking system that is in development. Numbers may change over the course of the LTP process.]	2024/25	N/A	520km	520km	520km	520km per year
1.2	Kilometres of scheme river erosion protection maintained e.g. mulching of maintenance of vegetation used for river bank erosion (such as mulching of willows).	2024/25	N/A	75km	75km	75km	75km
1.3	Kilometres of river channel maintenance completed e.g. movement of gravel in a reach to reduce erosion pressure on stopbanks.	2024/25	N/A	18km	18km	18km	18km
1.4	Number of scheme flood gates maintained e.g. cleaned, repaired, adjusted etc.	2024/25	N/A	97	97	97	97

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1.5	Kilometres of scheme stopbanks maintained e.g. mowing of stopbanks, repairs to stopbanks etc.	2024/25	N/A	65km	65km	65km	65km
1.6	Number of river scheme amenity works maintained (e.g. tracks on stopbanks).	2024/25	N/A	1	1	1	1
2. We will complete asset management activity for the River and Drainage Schemes							
2.1	% of critical assets inspection completed	Baseline for modified measure 2024/25	N/A	75%	76%	77%	78%
2.2	% of non-critical assets inspections completed	Baseline for modified measure 2024/25	N/A	20%	20%	20%	20%
2.3	% of Assets Renewal program completed.	2024/25	N/A	75%	75%	75%	75%
2.4	Asset condition report provided to Council. May report on the previous year's information.	Baseline for modified measure 2024/25	N/A	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
2.5	Asset revaluation process completed and reported to Council. May report on the previous year's information.	2024/25	N/A	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
2.6	Number of assets upgraded or modified to meet NPS-FM requirements	2024/25	N/A	2	2	2	2
3. We will continue to undertake capital works programs that have been identified through the planning process and approved by Council at the first Integrated Catchment Committee meeting at the start of each financial year							
3.1	Percentage of the approved capital works programme completed.	Baseline year 2023-24	N/A	60%	65%	70%	70%

4. We will continue to respond to weather events that impact our River and Drainage Schemes							
4.1	Council are informed of the likely impact of weather events that cause significant damage to river and drainage schemes on work programs and budget within three months of the event occurring.	Baseline for modified measure 2024/25	N/A	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
5. We will report on River and Drainage Regulatory Activity							
5.1	Dam Safety Assurance Program reports completed as a part of meeting the Dam Safety regulations 2022.	2024/25	N/A	5	9	0 (Not required)	0 (Not required)
5.2	Intermediate Dam Safety Review reports completed as a part of meeting the Dam Safety regulations 2022	2024/25	N/A	0	5	14	14
5.3	Annual report on regulatory activity including Environmental Code of Practice and consents and work to align with new regulations such as national policy statements and Environmental standards	2024/25	N/A	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
6. We will continue to provide advice and direction around performance and sustainability of our scheme networks							
6.1	Number of Gravel Management reports completed	2024/25	N/A	2	2	2	2
6.2	Flood vulnerability assessments reports completed (year 1 only)	2024/25	N/A	1	0	0	0
6.3	Annual Report on Room for the River projects	2024/25	N/A	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve	Achieve
7. We will continue to provide Environmental Grants to assist applicants to undertake works within waterways							
7.1	Number of Environmental Grants completed	Baseline for modified measure 2024/25	N/A	5	5	5	5

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Land Management

WHAT WE DO

The Land Management Activity is focussed on reducing erosion, protecting soil health and encouraging sustainable use of our land resources.

The major component of the programme is the Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI) which has objectives to:

- Build resilience to adverse events in the rural sector and region;
- Protect downstream communities and extend the life of flood protection assets; and
- Improve water quality in the region's waterways.

The programme has been underway since 2006 and is currently in its fifth contract that provides government co-funding support for the work via the Hill Country Erosion Fund. SLUI uses a variety of tools, including farm mapping and developing works programmes, to treat erosion and address water quality issues. The programme also provides advice and grant funding to support the implementation of these works programmes. An additional component of the SLUI programme is the management of some Forestry Right arrangements that have been established with programme funding.

The Land Management Activity has a number other programmes focused on providing land use advice (with limited grant assistance) to landowners, community groups, and others. The Regional and Coast programme includes the Whanganui Catchment Strategy (WCS) that is co-funded by the Whanganui River Enhancement Trust; an environment grant programme; soil health monitoring; and industry partnerships support. Horizons also operates poplar and willow pole nurseries to supply materials required for successful delivery of the erosion control. The nursery programme includes purchasing poplar and willow poles from other suppliers to meet demand from landowners.

WHY WE DO IT

Over half our region's land is classified as hill country and, in an economy defined by agriculture, it is vital to manage this land sustainably. The Manawātū-Whanganui Region has the largest amount of highly erodible land of any region in New Zealand. SLUI takes a 'mountains to the sea' approach to protecting our valuable hill country soils where they are at risk of moderate to severe erosion. The programme has established farm plans on over 970 farms covering more than one third of the region. The Land Management Activity works closely with landowners and industry to promote and support sustainable land use. This work aligns strongly with Horizons' goals to build resilience to climate change, support healthy ecosystems and empower the community.

KEY PROJECTS

Sustainable land use initiative (SLUI)

The SLUI programme is an important part of the region's activity to build resilience to climate change and achieve water quality outcomes. Over the life of SLUI more than 670,000 ha of whole farm plans have been established and over 55,000 ha of erosion control works completed. While the programme is operating at a significant scale, modelling by Landcare Research indicates at the current rate of implementation the programme will struggle to offset the impacts of climate change on hill country erosion impacts on sediment in waterways in the longer-term.

The SLUI programme is having to evolve in response to the changing regulatory environment which has made farm plans a requirement. The SLUI programme is no longer seeking to produce whole farm plans over the life of the Long-term Plan and will now undertake farm mapping to identify and prioritise the work. The major focus of the programme will be on completing erosion control works. The first three years of the Long-term Plan have government co-funding secured via the Hill Country Erosion Fund that is



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administered by Te Uru Rākau. The Long-term Plan is forecasting more government co-funding to be available over the life of the Long-term Plan. The budget for years 1-3 is \$5,278,000 to \$5,693,000 per annum.

To deliver on the contract targets, the Long-term Plan includes an increase of \$248,000 in year 2 and \$100,000 in year 3 of the programme. The Land Management Activity has other increases provisioned in year 1 of the Long-term Plan related to accounting requirements for the Forestry Right forests. These include a reduction to the forecast increase in forestry valuation each year and provisioning funding for replanting costs to meet audit requirements.

CHANGES IN WHAT WE WILL DELIVER

The Land Management programme is proposed to continue through the Long-term Plan with some minor changes. These changes include no longer producing farm plans and more of a focus on supporting on-farm erosion control works. The targets for the programme have been amended to align with the new government contract and the focus on on-farm works (see below).

The scale of our SLUI work is influenced by central government funding. Central government funding is contracted for the first three years of the Long-term Plan. There may be a reduction in size and scale of SLUI if central government funding reduces.

Regional and Coast Programme

The Regional and Coast component of the Land Management Activity aims to provide advice and support on sustainable land management and erosion control to both internal and external stakeholders, including industry and community groups.

Part of the grant-assisted work programme is supported by the Whanganui River Enhancement Trust through the Whanganui Catchment Strategy work programme. A further grant-assistance programme is delivered region-wide through the Environment Grant programme. These grant programmes have a broader focus than the SLUI programme and include works and farms that

are outside the scope of the SLUI programme.

The Regional and Coast work programme also delivers on Horizons' commitment to the national soil health monitoring programme. The industry partnerships programme supports and partners with a variety of industry and community-led programmes promoting sustainable land use. This includes partnerships with the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust, and the Poplar and Willow Research Trust. Staff support and provide advice to industry and catchment projects. These long-standing programmes are planned continue over the Long-term Plan at an approximate cost to Council of \$750,000 per annum.

Pole Nurseries

The land management programme also runs pole nurseries and purchases poles to supply erosion control material to projects in the region. This assists with land management and river management and flood protection activity. A provision of capital for an expansion to the nursery activity has been included in year four of the Long-term Plan.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THIS ACTIVITY

Impacts on the environment

Much of the activity is dedicated to working with others to improve environmental outcomes. However, some aspects of the work can have, or be perceived to have, negative impacts on the environment.

Examples of this include the potential climate change impact through activities like travel to work locations, constructing fences, flood defences etc. In part some of this impact will be offset by the significant amount of planting and pest control that is undertaken which will have a positive impact on carbon sequestration.

Impacts on People

Ecological enhancement activities are undertaken to provide overall benefits for the community. In some cases, the provision of these services can have

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impacts on some of the community through changing their local area, impacting on their properties, cultural values etc.

HOW WE WILL FUND THIS ACTIVITY

This activity has been divided into two sub-activities for funding, following an assessment of most appropriate funding sources. This provides transparency and accountability in relation to costs and benefits.

Regional and coast

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.

Remainder:

- 100% General Rate.

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

Rationale

The need for this activity comes from environmental degradation as a result of a range of factors, including catchment characteristics, climate change impacts and rural land use.

The deforestation of erodible hill country was in-part encouraged by central government policy historically.

Benefits accrue to the whole region, as our land management activity responds to land-based issues which impact on the health of our soil and water resources and increased regional resilience to storm events.

Sustainable land use initiative (SLUI)

Funding arrangements

- Grants and subsidies in the first instance.
- 100% UAC (SLUI)

Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing

Rationale

The need for this service comes from environmental degradation as a result of a range of factors, including catchment characteristics, climate change impacts and rural land use.

The deforestation of erodible hill country was in-part encouraged by central government policy historically.

Benefits accrue to the whole region, as our land management activity responds to land-based issues which impact on the health of our soil and water resources and increased regional resilience to storm events.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS

The land management performance targets have been reviewed as a part of the Long-term Plan. In summary the changes include:

- The SLUI Programme target for erosion control works being increased to 3,285 ha in year 1 from 2,900 ha in the 2023-24 Annual Plan. The target is forecast to increase further to 3,540 ha for years 2 to 10.
- The target for SLUI whole farm plan production being removed in response to SLUI no longer producing whole farm plans.
- The targets for the Regional and Coast Grant programmes via the Whanganui Catchment Strategy and Environment Grant Programme being merged. The way these programmes is measured has also been changed to reflect the number of grants for works completed rather than the previous measure of hectares of work completed. This change reflects a goal to support a range of projects across multiple landowners rather than focusing on larger projects. It also assists with the uncertainty around the types of projects that will be completed in any one year and the number of hectares that will be completed.

The target for 5 industry partnerships to be supported and 30,000 willow and poplar poles to be made available for erosion control programmes remain the same.



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PERFORMANCE TARGETS

LAND MANAGEMENT							
Levels of service and performance measures		Performance Measure/Target					
		Baseline	Actual 22/23	24/25 Target	25/26 Target	26/27 Target	Years 4-10 Target
1. Under the Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI) programme, we deliver erosion control works on farms							
1.1	Hectares of erosion control works completed.	Baseline year for modified target: 2023-24	4038 (Achieved)	3,285	3,540	3,540	3540 per year
2. Regional and Coast, and Whanganui Catchment Strategy programmes deliver advice and funding to decrease erosion and/or improve water quality through provision of advice and financial support via grants for works							
2.1	Number of grants for works completed	Baseline year for modified target: 2023-24	N/A	50	50	50	50 grants per year
3. Under the Regional and Coast programme we will engage in industry partnerships to promote sustainable land management							
3.1	Support industry initiatives that promote sustainable land use	2022/23	8 groups (Achieved)	5 groups	5 groups	5 groups	5 groups per year
4. Under the Horizons willow and poplar pole nursery programme we will produce and source poles for use in erosion control programmes							
4.1	Number of poles made available for erosion control programmes	2022/23	31,366 (Achieved)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000 per year

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HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL: FUNDING IMPACT STATEMENT FOR 2024-34 FOR CATCHMENT OPERATIONS (\$000)

	Annual Plan 2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Long-term Plan 2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Sources of operating funding											
General rates, uniform annual general charges, rates penalties	17,672	17,866	19,224	20,460	21,171	21,504	22,166	22,775	23,399	24,203	24,805
Targeted rates	17,314	19,381	21,060	22,415	23,488	24,165	25,185	26,233	27,379	28,626	29,838
Subsidies and grants for operating purposes	4,678	3,050	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910	910
Fees and charges	3,150	3,182	3,249	3,328	3,412	3,492	3,570	3,648	3,728	3,808	3,887
Internal charges and overheads recovered	1,205	1,550	1,610	1,637	1,672	1,674	1,695	1,708	1,732	1,773	1,793
Local authorities fuel tax, fines, infringement fees, and other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total operating funding (A)	44,019	45,029	46,053	48,750	50,653	51,745	53,526	55,274	57,148	59,320	61,233
Applications of operating funding											
Payments to staff and suppliers	20,880	21,530	21,666	23,622	24,355	25,305	26,428	27,649	29,002	30,478	32,078
Finance costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal charges and overheads applied	18,682	20,281	21,456	22,343	23,109	23,045	23,531	23,865	24,200	24,745	24,884
Other operating funding applications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total applications of operating funding (B)	39,562	41,811	43,122	45,965	47,464	48,350	49,959	51,514	53,202	55,223	56,962
Surplus (deficit) of operating funding (A-B)	4,457	3,218	2,931	2,785	3,189	3,395	3,567	3,760	3,946	4,097	4,271
Sources of capital funding											
Subsidies and grants for capital expenditure	8,232	10,887	906	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Development and financial contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase (decrease) in debt	-	2,140	4,929	3,663	297	138	40	(80)	(2,537)	(2,638)	(2,744)
Gross proceeds from sale of assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lump sum contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other dedicated capital funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total sources of capital funding (C)	8,232	13,027	5,835	3,663	297	138	40	(80)	(2,537)	(2,638)	(2,744)
Application of capital funding											
Capital expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
to meet additional demand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
to improve level of service	13,669	15,459	7,843	5,627	2,167	2,217	2,265	2,313	25	25	25
to replace existing assets	199	297	464	290	296	209	230	273	407	319	331
Increase (decrease) in reserves	(1,179)	489	459	531	1,023	1,107	1,112	1,094	977	1,115	1,171
Increase (decrease) of investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total applications of capital funding (D)	12,689	16,245	8,766	6,448	3,486	3,533	3,607	3,680	1,409	1,459	1,527
Surplus (deficit) of capital funding (C - D)	(4,457)	(3,218)	(2,931)	(2,785)	(3,189)	(3,395)	(3,567)	(3,760)	(3,946)	(4,097)	(4,271)
Funding balance ((A - B)+(C - D))	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	2,210	2,940	2,874	2,863	2,860	2,825	2,832	2,799	2,829	2,882	2,926



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