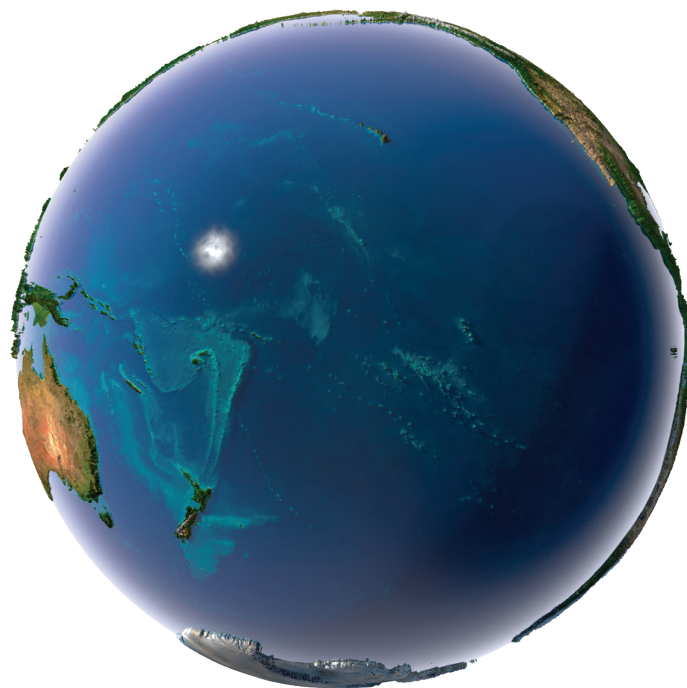


Community engagement on climate change adaptation

Case studies

August 2020



**We are.
LGNZ.**

Te Kāhui Kaunihera o Aotearoa.



Contents

Foreword p3

1> Introduction p5

2> What is community engagement? p8

3> The key challenges: common themes emerging from the case studies p11

4> Case Study 1: Kaipara District Council – The Ruawai Flats p13

5> Case Study 2: Christchurch City Council – Southshore and South New Brighton p19

6> Case Study 3: Dunedin City Council – South Dunedin p25

7> Recommendations p30

Foreword



Foreword

Over the last 12 months, there has been a groundswell of public debate on the need for more action on climate change. From street marches to column inches, there has been no shortage of mainstream focus on climate change.

Notable too has been the growing awareness of the need to prepare for the effects climate change will have on our nation. Councils play a critical role in leading this adaptation response.

The pertinent question for communities, local government and central government is how is this being translated into action on climate change, and are our systems well-positioned to enable the change our people want to see?

These are two complex questions, and to answer them Local Government New Zealand collaborated with three councils to gain a better understanding of the challenges they face when having tough conversations with climate change affected communities.

The three councils profiled – Christchurch City, Dunedin City and Kaipara District – are all at different points in their climate change adaptation journey.

The findings are contained in the report you now hold.

Our work reveals shortcomings in New Zealand's legislative system as it relates to climate change adaptation, but also the varying maturity of communities themselves to the threats posed to their well-being from various climate-related risks.

This is understandable to some degree. Although climate change has been a well-understood threat in scientific and policy circles for a number of years, the desire from communities for action has eclipsed the ability of the system to respond, and we are very much in catch-up mode.

This shines through in our case studies, with both councils and communities calling out for strong national direction, adequate resourcing, clear communication, definition of roles and responsibility, direction around engagement and good partnerships between local government, central government and the private sector.

Our task, as LGNZ, is now to advocate for these exact changes. Our goal is to ensure that when, in many years' time, a review of the same councils profiled in this report is done the story is one of communities being enabled and supported in their adaptation efforts.

Dave Cull
President

1 >

Introduction

Introduction

Climate change, and in particular sea level rise, are complex to understand and plan for. They are science-heavy and uncertain. Yet the impact of climate change and sea level rise is potentially very high, particularly for vulnerable communities.

Climate change and sea level rise are likely to have significant physical impacts on the places in which communities live, and the infrastructure that services them. But they are also likely to have significant impacts on peoples' lives and well-being. Both present a very real risk of 'loss of autonomy' for individuals and communities. There are risks that people lose the ability to make independent choices about where they live, or what they do with the assets that they own. There is uncertainty for communities too – uncertainty about the impact that climate change might or might not have, when the impacts will be felt, and how central and local government might respond to changes, such as through re-zoning or red-zoning of land. The uncertainty and the risk of loss of autonomy associated with climate change has flow-on consequences for well-being, mental health and community cohesion, to name but a few.

These significant impacts make it imperative that communities are engaged in discussions about how to plan and prepare for climate change. Communities should play a significant part in influencing transparent decisions that are made by local and central government agencies about how to respond, and adapt, to the changing climate.

Local government in New Zealand is at the frontline of climate change adaptation, and managing these complex issues with communities. A number of councils are already engaging with communities on climate change adaptation. Some councils are at the early stages of engagement – raising awareness of climate change and the impacts it is likely to have. Others are further down a path of engagement, having worked with communities to identify short, medium and long-term options for how the community will adapt to climate change. Some are still working out how to begin more formal and targeted conversations with communities. The nature of the engagement that is underway, and the success of that engagement, is variable.

Despite councils recognising the urgent need to engage with communities on climate change, and best efforts to do so in a meaningful and comprehensive way, there are a number of barriers making it difficult for councils to engage. In some cases there are barriers making it difficult for councils to get engagement with their community underway. In other cases, barriers are making it difficult for engagement that is underway to progress. There are also barriers making it difficult for councils to implement adaptation strategies and plans that have been developed in partnership with their communities.

A number of perceived barriers to undertaking and progressing engagement were recently identified in research completed by Dr Janet Stephenson as part of the Deep South National Science Challenge, *Local Authorities and Community Engagement on Climate Change Adaptation*. Key challenges that were identified in Dr Stephenson's research included:

- Councils are uncertain as to what their roles and responsibilities for adaptation are;
- There is uncertainty as to the scale and timing of climate change impacts;
- Councils fear pushback from the community;
- Councils are uncertain as to how best to engage with their communities;
- There is uncertainty around what kinds of solutions will work; and
- The financial implications of engagement.

Following the release of this research, and a number of other publications documenting the impacts of climate change and legal risks associated with failing to address those, LGNZ identified a need to further understand the work that councils are doing to engage with their communities on climate change adaptation. In particular, LGNZ identified a need to get a clear understanding of the practical issues and areas of uncertainty that are making it difficult for councils to effectively engage.

To do this, LGNZ decided to work with three councils – Dunedin City Council, Christchurch City Council and Kaipara District Council – to understand the engagement they are undertaking with their communities, what is working well, what is proving challenging, and what support or change (primarily at the national level) could help to make the engagement more effective. LGNZ has produced three case studies – one for each council – which explore these questions.

The three case studies focus on the process of engagement itself, or indeed in some cases, getting that process underway. They don't focus on the specific challenges that some councils are facing in implementing adaptation strategies and plans that have been developed through extensive engagement with communities, such as the challenges that councils in the Hawke's Bay are working through to give effect to the Clifton to Tangoio Coastal Hazards Strategy.

Collectively, the case studies reveal a number of common challenges being faced by each of the three councils, despite each being at a different stage of its engagement with its respective community or communities. What is of concern is that the number of challenges these three councils are facing in the context of trying to meaningfully engage with only one or two of their communities are considerable. The challenges will only become more numerous and complex as councils find themselves needing to engage with more and more of their diverse and distinct communities, that will be exposed to different climate change risks and impacted by them in varying ways.

Broadly, the biggest challenge for these three councils – and other councils across the country – is the lack of any overarching legislative, regulatory and policy framework for climate change adaptation. There is no framework that provides councils with clear direction and support on how they should be approaching adaptation decision-making, or engagement with their communities on it.

What is also clear from the case studies is the urgent need councils have for real and tangible support from central government to make engagement with communities easier. Councils acknowledge that engagement with communities on adapting to climate change will inevitably be complex and multi-layered. They recognise that engagement will need to take place over an extended period of time and require considerable resource. Councils know that uncertainty will need to be factored into both their engagement and decision-making, and they know they will need to be flexible and adaptive in the way they respond. But there are certain practical things that central government could do now that would make a considerable difference. Some of those things require considerably greater investment by the Government in adaptation. Some require legislative or policy change. Others require central government to simply broaden its thinking to include building resilience in the face of a changing climate, and working with local government as a key partner in achieving that.

2 >

**What is
community
engagement?**

What is community engagement?

For the purpose of this report and the three case studies it is focused on, the definition of community engagement referred to in Dr Janet Stephenson's work has been adopted:

“Engagement for climate change adaptation means developing active and ongoing relationships between local government and affected communities, as opposed to episodic public participation on an issue-by-issue basis.”

This kind of engagement differs in many respects to the ordinary consultation activities that councils regularly undertake on individual issues or pieces of work. Adapting to climate change will likely require councils and communities to develop decisions at many different points in time, over an extended period. Councils and communities will also need to engage on options for adapting without a full understanding of what the future holds.

Each of the three councils is to some extent working with the Ministry for the Environment's Coastal hazards and climate change: Guidance for local government. That guidance supports councils to manage and adapt to the increased coastal hazard risks posed by climate change and sea-level rise. It provides some direction around the need for councils to collaborate with communities when planning for the effects of climate change on coastal hazards. It sets out a range of community engagement principles, and provides an overview of a range of engagement methods and tools that councils can use.

As will be demonstrated by each of the case studies, councils are finding it challenging to work out how to implement the Coastal Hazards Guidance in practice. They are unclear as to what level of resourcing, from an engagement point of view, is needed at each step of the process that the Guidance sets out. They need further direction as to what engagement at each step of the process should look like. They are particularly concerned that the guidance provided around community engagement is very limited in its focus on how to manage the community well-being implications of engagement on climate change adaptation.

Case study councils

As will be clear from the case studies, each of the three councils profiled is at a different point in its engagement with the community.

Kaipara District Council is in the very early stages of engaging with its Ruawai Flats community. To date, there is no formal climate change adaptation community engagement programme in place. Informal discussions have taken place with members of the community. But there is increasing recognition by the Council's governance and management of the need for a targeted and comprehensive approach to engagement, as a matter of urgency. The Council is working through the issue of where to start with its more formal engagement, and how.

Christchurch City Council finds itself emerging from a period of engaging with its Southshore and South New Brighton communities on earthquake legacy issues, and transitioning to engagement in earnest on climate change adaptation. The Council is well-versed in engaging with communities on tricky and controversial issues, and has established good mechanisms and networks for engagement, which can be applied to engagement on adaptation. However, the Council is grappling with the issue of working out the parameters of the discussions it can have with the community around adaptation. It is also working out which communities it should prioritise engagement with. The Southshore and South New Brighton communities have been extensively engaged since the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, and so the Council sees a need to engage with some other communities on adaptation.

Dunedin City Council has a well-established programme of engagement with the South Dunedin community on an extensive range of issues, including climate change. Of the three councils, Dunedin's engagement with the community has largely stemmed from a climate change-induced extreme weather event in 2015. That has created unique circumstances for the Council where a considerable portion of its engagement to date has been focused on rebuilding the trust of the South Dunedin community. Despite ongoing engagement, the Council is not advanced in having worked out solutions with the community, but is creating a platform for the community to have real and meaningful input into working out solutions.

Case study methodology

Each of the three case studies has been developed by LGNZ following discussions with key members of staff working on each council's community engagement programme. In some cases, LGNZ has also had discussions with elected members. For each of the three case studies, LGNZ has also had discussions with members of the community that have participated in, or helped to inform, each council's engagement activities. Those discussions with members of the community have taken place with the full knowledge of each of the participating councils.

Each council has been provided with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the case study that LGNZ has prepared.

Material to inform these case studies was gathered over late 2019 – 2020.

Report structure

This report is structured into three parts:

1. Summary of the common themes arising from the three case studies;
2. The case studies; and
3. A set of recommendations.

The set of recommendations has been developed with input from each of the three participating councils.

3 >

**The key
challenges:
common themes
emerging from
the case studies**

The key challenges: common themes emerging from the case studies

Each council identified a wide range of challenges that is making it difficult to commence or undertake engagement with its communities. Broadly, the challenges identified by each of the three councils fit under five key themes.

A policy vacuum

Without clear direction from the Government on climate change adaptation policy and funding settings, councils are finding it difficult to know what is in and out of scope in the discussions they have with communities about options for adaptation. That is making planning engagement activity difficult. Councils are concerned about creating expectations that ultimately won't be able to be met, due to funding or policy constraints. They are concerned about not being in a position to tell communities what can and can't be done. Councils fear that a range of ad hoc approaches will be taken across the country, which creates the risk of precedent setting. This policy vacuum, and therefore lack of consistent approach to adaptation across the country, is the major challenge for councils.

Resourcing challenges

Councils are finding it difficult to undertake comprehensive and meaningful engagement with communities due to a lack of funding, human resource and access to relevant expertise. They are uncertain as to what level of resourcing is needed for effective engagement, and to avoid liability for failing to adequately engage.

In particular, councils are finding it difficult to identify the level of resource and what actions are needed to implement the Ministry for the Environment's Coastal Hazards Guidance. They are working out 'on the job' what level of engagement with the community is required at each step of the process, and how much that will cost.

Communication and well-being

Councils are finding it difficult to determine the level of information that a community needs in order to be able to meaningfully participate in engagement. They are working out how best to communicate uncertainty, particularly where uncertainty has the potential to create negative psycho-social outcomes for communities. Councils lack guidance on how to engage with communities on climate change adaptation in a manner that is sensitive to their well-being.

Hearing from the right people

Councils are grappling with how to ensure that all relevant parties are participating in their engagement processes. They are working out how to ensure that the diversity of voices within a community is adequately heard, and that those voices are given appropriate weight. In particular, councils are trying to work out how best to ensure that the voices of those both directly and indirectly affected by adaptation options are adequately heard. There are concerns about what legally constitutes adequate engagement with different parts of the community.

A lack of partnership with central government

Councils are receiving limited support from the Government for their work on climate change adaptation. They are struggling to identify relevant contacts within central government agencies to participate in community engagement processes, and are concerned that central and local government thinking and messaging on adaptation is not aligned. Councils are uncertain as to what the whole-of-Government position on adaptation is, or what work individual agencies are doing that might be of relevance to councils' adaptation work.

4 >

**Case Study 1:
Kaipara District
Council – The
Ruawai Flats**

Case Study 1: Kaipara District Council – The Ruawai Flats

Introduction

Ruawai is a small township located in the Kaipara District, about 30km south of Dargaville, in Northland. The area was once a swamp and sits below sea level where the Northern Wairoa River meets the Kaipara Harbour – hence its name denoting the two waters. The Ruawai Flats are home to 500 residents and approximately 186 dwellings, a number of small businesses and considerable agriculture production mainly in the dairy and kumara sectors. Ruawai sits within the North Kaipara Agricultural Delta and significantly contributes to the 95 per cent of New Zealand’s kumara supply grown in the area, which is also known as the “Kumara capital of the world”. Ruawai is serviced by State Highway 12, and a number of public assets including local roads, public buildings and three waters infrastructure.

Ruawai’s community, its economic base and its infrastructure are protected from the Northern Wairoa River by a complex system of 3.5 metre high stop banks, flood gates and drains. The Raupo Drainage District system was constructed with a £40,000 grant from the Government after the Great War. Covering 9,000 hectares of flat alluvial land, the small settlements at the time were named Raupo, Naumai and (then) smaller Ruawai. The locally-elected Raupo Drainage Board managed the engineering and maintenance of the drainage system until 1989 local government amalgamation, at which point the stand-alone board became a joint committee of Kaipara District Council, comprising local elected Raupo ratepayers and councillors.

The Raupo Drainage Committee has ensured Ruawai’s drainage system and flood protection infrastructure has been well-maintained and managed in recent decades. Northland Regional Council does not have a governance role with this drainage committee, though mandated to lead flood protection across all Northland. For Kaipara District Council this Raupo Drainage Committee governance model is unique and significant - a further 28 other, much smaller, private drainage districts exist in the North Kaipara Agricultural Delta although none is managed by a committee of Council in the manner of the Raupo Drainage Committee. This community governance model has been in place in one form or another for more than a century.

This case study pertains to the Raupo Drainage District area only.

Over the years, there have been occasional instances of the area’s 70km of salt-water stop banks being topped mostly in relation to extreme weather events. However there is now a growing recognition that the impacts of a changing climate present real risks for Ruawai and its flood protection infrastructure. Indeed the Raupo Drainage Committee have been slowly strengthening and raising the levels of the stop banks over the last decade. With extreme weather events becoming increasingly more prevalent, and growing recognition that sea level rise could become an issue for Ruawai – Kaipara Harbour sits to the South of The Flats – Kaipara District Council’s governors and management team are turning their thoughts to how Ruawai adapts and builds its resilience to climate change. But working out how best to engage with the community on what adaptation to climate change looks like for Ruawai and how it might be funded, is challenging.

This is a community where there hasn’t in recent decades been a major extreme weather event that has severely impacted the day-to-day lives of the community. It is a community where, due to the effectiveness of the stop banks and other infrastructure that has for the most part provided protection from flood risk, there is some uncertainty around the need for adaptation to climate change, and urgency of that need.

While Christchurch and Dunedin City Councils are well on a path of working towards development of adaptation strategies and plans with their affected communities, Kaipara District Council is only just beginning the conversation it recognises it needs to have with the Ruawai community and other potentially affected communities. Ruawai is one part of a 250km² area in Kaipara District which is vulnerable to sea level rise of 1.5m. As such, the challenges the council has around community engagement are different in nature and scale to those of other, larger councils, which may be further along the path of engagement and adaptation. But the challenges Kaipara District Council has with kicking off its community engagement aren’t insignificant, or unique.



Image: Circa 1920

Many of New Zealand's councils, like Kaipara District, are small and face resourcing constraints. And while the Ruawai community might be relatively small, it is a vulnerable community and it represents the challenges faced by communities throughout the North Kaipara Agricultural Delta area. If its critical economic base of agriculture and kumara production is adversely affected, there will be considerable flow on effects for the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the wider community. That could have further flow-on impacts on the Council's level of resourcing. Ruawai is but one of many small and vulnerable communities that is going to have to work out how to live with the changing climate.

So, this case study explores not so much the challenges that Kaipara District Council is facing as it continues to engage with its community on climate change adaptation, but instead the very real challenges that are making it hard to get engagement in earnest going in the first place.

Background

Kaipara District Council is small. It employs around 150 people. It serves a population of 23,000 with principal towns being Dargaville and Mangawhai. Its operating expenditure is \$47.947m in the 2018-2019 year. That is compared with Christchurch City Council's operating expenditure of \$785.036m per annum, and Dunedin City Council's \$257.512m.

The Council has a chequered history of engagement with its community. In 2012, the Council was replaced by four central government appointed commissioners, following a series of governance and financial challenges that the then councillors were unable to resolve associated with a community wastewater scheme in Mangawhai. It was only in 2016 that the commissioners were replaced by an elected council, and a by-election in 2018 in which Dr Jason Smith was elected Mayor. Mayor Dr Smith was re-elected in October 2019, along with a full council.

While the Council's financial difficulties have largely been resolved, the Council now finds itself in a position similar to that of the Christchurch and Dunedin City Councils – needing to rebuild the community's trust in the Council. How it engages with the community is critical to that. And despite the resolution of financial issues, many ratepayers in the District remain sensitive about investing in infrastructure, particularly where investments benefit only a portion of the District's population.

Flood protection infrastructure– the current state of play

Kaipara's stop banks and other flood protection infrastructure continues to be managed and maintained by Kaipara District Council. The Raupo Drainage Committee is the only formal

committee of Council involved with land drainage. Typically, flood protection infrastructure is managed and maintained by a regional council. The arrangement that exists today is the result of historic 1989 negotiations between Kaipara District Council and Northland Regional Council.

Costs associated with maintaining and operating the stop banks and flood protection infrastructure are largely met by a targeted rate imposed on residents within the drainage districts and are increasing. In part, this is due to growing recognition of the need to ensure that the stop banks are able to accommodate the future risk of sea level rise, and increased extreme weather events leading to occasional over-topping events in recent years.

To ensure that Ruawai's flood protection infrastructure is fit for purpose, the Council, and in particular its governors and the Raupo Drainage Committee, recognise that they will eventually need to make additional investment into that infrastructure. The critical challenge will be how willing the Ruawai community, and potentially wider District, is to pay for those upgrades, particularly given the uncertainty around the timing, pace and magnitude of climate change impacts.

Engagement with the community to date

In October 2018, a local community group, the Ruawai Promotions and Development Group (RPDG) arranged a meeting between residents, business owners, Kaipara District Council and Northland Regional Council. The purpose of the meeting was for the two Councils to convey to the community why consents were becoming more difficult to obtain in Ruawai, and why elevation conditions were increasingly being attached to consents on the floodplain.

Councils were able to respond quickly to the community's request for a meeting, and Northland Regional Council staff presented largely technical DEM and LiDAR maps of the Ruawai Flats that showed the risks to the area from sea level rise, and relevant planning provisions. Around 60 people from the Ruawai community attended the meeting. The data and planning documents which were presented highlighted a number of significant risks to infrastructure and investment in the Ruawai area. Residents were concerned about the risks that were presented to them.

Following the meeting, members of the RPDG wrote to both Kaipara District Council and Northland Regional Council, expressing a view that ensuring the integrity of Ruawai's flood protection infrastructure was critical. They indicated that stop banks would need further raising and strengthening, and that pump stations might need to be installed, if the community were to remain confident that it could invest and develop, and continue to live and do business, in the Ruawai area. Kaipara District Council's new councillors immediately

recognised a need to engage further with the Raupo Drainage Committee and the wider Ruawai community on what further options for addressing the risks from climate change might look like.

However, to date, the Council and councillors have only engaged with members of the community informally. Until a decision was made in late 2019 to appoint a climate change coordinator to the Council's staff, there has not been any dedicated resource within Kaipara District Council working on following up with members of the community following the initial October 2018 meeting.

Some work has been done by the Raupo Drainage Committee in conjunction with Council staff to identify the likely costs associated with raising the 70km of salt-water facing stop banks. Those costs are estimated to be roughly \$78 million for the Ruawai area. But there remain further issues to address with the community: is this the most appropriate adaptation response and how should it be funded? The current lack of national policy direction around these issues is adding to the complexity the Council and its community faces in addressing those questions.

The challenges associated with getting further engagement underway

Despite recognition by Kaipara's elected leaders of the need to address the challenges and opportunities of climate change, there are a number of challenges and complexities that are making it difficult for the Council to get more focused and comprehensive community engagement underway.

A policy vacuum

Kaipara District Council is in the early stages of developing a policy framework for adapting to climate change and is a participating member of Climate Adaptation Te Taitokerau. However, the Council notes the absence of any national direction around adaptation outcomes, tolerable and intolerable risk thresholds and suitable responses to those risks on which it may draw. Council has adjusted to the absence of national direction and resourcing by participating in a regional, shared approach to adaptation. While this participation has propelled adaptation planning, Council still sees a need for central government to provide a consistent and agreed upon set of options for adaptation. This includes clarity around roles and responsibilities between relevant parties so that communities better understand Council's parameters for engagement.

Equally, the Council is unclear on who is responsible for paying the costs of adaptation especially where adaptation measures are related to areas of highly productive land such as the Ruawai area. It

has questions around the extent to which directly affected property owners should pay, versus the whole community, and is uncertain as to whether any central government funding assistance will be provided, for example, for security of SH12 which connects Dargaville with Auckland 2.5hrs to its south across the Ruawai Flats.

The Council is concerned that with so many relevant factors still unknown, there is the potential for the community's expectations of what can be done to be greater than is realistic or possible. The Council is also concerned about the potential for ad hoc approaches across the country, resulting in the creation of expectations, or setting of precedent. Failing to meet community expectations creates a real risk of the community's trust and confidence in the Council and its engagement processes being undermined. Council sees the need for national direction around how the costs of adaptation should be borne. Central government assistance in this regard would particularly help at a political level, so the Council isn't forced into a situation of being pitted against the community, and trust being eroded.

The Council would benefit in being able to design its engagement with the community around a clearly defined national policy framework, that still allows for local circumstances and values to be factored into decisions that ultimately get made. That would assist in the Council being clear and upfront with its community about what is feasible or not, and how options will be implemented. It would also provide the Council with clarity around what it should and shouldn't be engaging on.

Central government input

To date, there has been limited engagement by central government agencies with Kaipara District Council on climate change adaptation. For example, there has been no engagement, support or messaging from NZTA, despite the presence of a State Highway in Ruawai, and no engagement from the Ministry of Primary Industries, despite the prevalence and importance of kumara and dairy production in Ruawai.

Clarity from central government agencies on their climate change adaptation priorities would help the Council to have better informed discussions with the Ruawai community about the future of the area. Direction on the investments the Government intends to make (or not make) in Ruawai, in light of climate change considerations, would also help provide the Council with a steer on the government's intentions for the area in the long-term.

The engagement process

Kaipara District Council doesn't yet have a clear sense of what its process for engaging with the Ruawai community in a more

formal manner will look like. The Council does acknowledge that this is in large part due to the lack of available resource to dedicate time and effort to identifying options for engagement. The recent appointment (early 2020) of a climate change-focused policy analyst will provide greater capacity to do some of this work and the development of a climate change strategy including an adaptation action plan.

While the Council is familiar with the Ministry for the Environment's Coastal Hazards Guidance, it is concerned about how it will adequately resource the time-consuming and multi-stepped process the Guidance envisages, even with a dedicated member of staff on board. Like many other councils, Kaipara District Council is unsure of the level of resource that will be needed to implement the Guidance. It has some concerns that the Guidance is geared towards those councils with larger pools of resources, and that in order to implement the Guidance effectively it would need to engage a considerable number of external consultants or experts. That would have significant implications for the Council's already constrained operating expenditure.

To develop a robust engagement process, the Council has looked to other territorial authorities for adaptive pathways planning models and project examples and is working on a shared regional approach. This is in response to a gap in strong national direction and resourcing. Increased direction and resourcing would ensure consistency and increase Council's capacity to plan and respond.

Timeframes for engagement

Members of the community expect the Council to be able to respond quickly to requests for information, meetings and engagement. That was evidenced by the quick turnaround that the RPDG expected of (and indeed received) from Kaipara District Council and Northland Regional Council when it first requested a meeting in 2018. The process of engagement envisaged by the Coastal Hazards Guidance doesn't necessarily reflect the reality of the expectations that communities have of councils to engage quickly and nimbly. The timeline for Council's policy framework around climate change adaptation is long and early "pre-engagement" will be needed to ensure the community understands the process is underway.

Adaptive pathways planning has emerged as the preferred process in relation to the Guidance.

This process includes some options to alleviate community loss of interest or engagement fatigue. These options are resource-intensive and require significant professional services and or increased full time employees.



Image: Cropping land and the Kaipara Harbour

Adopting an engagement process that satisfies the community's expectations, particularly around timeframes, is important to Kaipara District Council, as it wants to keep the community interested while also meeting its expectations.

Information

Some members of the community that attended the initial meeting facilitated by Kaipara District Council and Northland Regional Council in 2018 expressed a view that the information shared was too complex, too technical and too fulsome for them to fully comprehend.

There was also concern among members of the community that information about risk was presented without much information around options for addressing risk.

Since the initial meeting, Kaipara District Council has obtained considerably more information on its exposure to sea level rise, following completion of full LiDAR mapping of the district. The challenge now is to work out how to share this more complete information with the community, in ways that makes the information accessible and understandable.

As part of working out how best to share further information with the Ruawai community, the Council is also grappling with how it can share that information without creating unintended adverse consequences for the well-being of its community. While the Council acknowledges that an emotive response to information on climate change risk is inevitable, it wants to avoid as much as possible creating unintended consequences that have negative impacts on people's cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being.

Multiple climate change impacts

Kaipara District Council will need to work with communities in Ruawai, and across the district, to address a range of climate change impacts. In addition to increased risk of coastal inundation and flooding and freshwater flooding, communities also face increased risk of drought.

Drought events are also likely to increase in frequency. Due to the targeted focus of the MfE Guidance on coastal hazards, there is limited guidance for the Council on how it should tackle addressing multiple impacts with its community. The Council recognises that it is going to need to dedicate considerable time to the development of a policy framework and engagement plan needed to address the multiple risks that its Ruawai community is exposed to, and its other communities also affected by sea level rise.

Summary

For Kaipara District Council, these complexities and challenges are significant. What is of particular concern is that the complexities are significant in the context of dealing with adaptation for the Ruawai community alone, yet all of the District's communities will need to adapt to climate change. Addressing all of these complexities across multiple communities will likely stretch the capacity of the Council. National direction and support would bolster the Council's ability to effectively develop adaptation responses to climate change.



Image: Raupo Drainage Scheme map

5 >

**Case Study 2:
Christchurch
City Council
– Southshore
and South New
Brighton**

Case Study 2: Christchurch City Council – Southshore and South New Brighton

Introduction

The Christchurch suburbs of Southshore and South New Brighton sit on a spit, bordered by the coast on one side, and the Avon-Heathcote estuary on the other. The area is home to over 4,800 people. The area is susceptible to flooding, and is exposed to coastal hazards. Sea level rise and coastal inundation are real risks for the area in the long-term. Those risks have been exacerbated by the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes.

Engagement with the Southshore and South New Brighton communities on climate change adaptation is still in the early stages. However, central and local government agencies, including Christchurch City Council, have considerable experience in engaging with the community on earthquake legacy issues. An understanding of the engagement that has taken place around earthquake legacy issues is critical to understanding the current state of, and challenges associated with, community engagement on climate change adaptation.

Background

Both Southshore and South New Brighton were hit hard by the Canterbury earthquakes. The earthquakes caused the estuary edge land to drop in some places, which resulted in some damage to Council and privately owned erosion and flood management structures. 195 properties along the estuary edge were red-zoned, with 192 of those properties now owned by the Crown. That red-zoning announcement was delayed several times; the first of a series of delays in decisions relating to the area.

In 2017, Regenerate Christchurch initiated a project to develop a Regeneration Strategy for the Southshore and South New Brighton area, to address both earthquake legacy issues and longer-term adaptation to climate change and coastal hazards. Regenerate Christchurch worked with the community to develop a plan for delivering co-created Strategy, via a How Team model (detailed further below). However, the project did not progress far. By May 2019 Christchurch City Council resolved to take over leadership of the work and established two separate projects – the first to address earthquake legacy issues, and the second to develop an adaptation strategy for climate change, once earthquake legacy issues were addressed.

The history of the project having been passed between agencies, and delays in completing it, has further eroded the community's trust in central and local government agencies. That erosion of trust makes comprehensive engagement with the Southshore and South

New Brighton communities on climate change adaptation both challenging and of critical importance.

The How Team Model

Renew Brighton, a community group with presence in Southshore and South New Brighton, recommended that a 'How Team' be established to advise Regenerate Christchurch on how to engage with the community to develop the Southshore and South New Brighton Regeneration Strategy. The How Team model has also been utilised by Christchurch City Council after it took over responsibility for the Regeneration Strategy work.

The How Team was a group of community members (including a small number from outside the Southshore and South New Brighton community) and government agency staff that was focused on how decision-makers and communities work together. The role of the How Team was to provide advice on how communities could better participate in decision-making processes, and engage with agencies responsible for decision-making. The Team's focus was not what substantive decisions should be, but how agencies should have discussions with the community. The rationale was that if process is good, decisions will ultimately be better. Ultimately, the How Team model was designed to build trust between the community and public agencies.

The role of the first How Team that was established was to develop an engagement plan for Regenerate Christchurch. The plan focused on how to get genuine and effective input from the community into the development of the Regeneration Strategy. The Team's role wasn't to advise on the content of the Regeneration Strategy itself. The process resulted in an engagement plan that was seen as being responsive to local needs and community perspectives. The How Team was also responsible for keeping members of the community up-to-date as the engagement plan was developed. The first How Team was considered to be a success for a variety of reasons. The first How team was considered to be a success for a variety of reasons. An evaluation report on the How Team provides more detail about this, and is available from Renew Brighton: www.renewbrighton.org.

Subsequent How Teams focused on advising Christchurch City Council on the 'how' of implementing the engagement plan, including trying to address community well-being throughout the engagement process, and providing specific advice around how the Council should communicate with communities. Discussions with members of the How Team would suggest that the process of advising on the development of an engagement plan has been easier than advising on its implementation, and there is a sense

that the first How Team achieved more than subsequent teams in that it produced the tangible output of an engagement plan. For Christchurch City Council staff, the insights How Team members have provided on implementation and community perspectives throughout that process have been invaluable.

Renew Brighton employed a community-based convenor to establish and manage the How Team project. This included publicly advertising the positions on the How Team, receiving applications from members of the community, and facilitating the selection of team members by community leaders. Team members were chosen on their ability to listen and represent the common good, rather than as representatives of particular groups, demographics or particular issues. However, ensuring that diversity is represented on the How Team has been challenging. The How Team doesn't, for example, have any youth, Māori or elderly participants.

Regenerate Christchurch and the Christchurch City Council provided the funding for the employment of the community convenor, as well as funding for meeting fees for the community How Team members, catering, and childcare costs. Independent psycho-social support was also made available to How Team members. While the costs of supporting the How Team model have been significant, Council staff are strongly of the view that the benefits (both to the Council and to the wider community) far outweigh the costs. The How Team has been successful in establishing strong relationships within the community, and between community and government agencies. Those relationships are critical given the ongoing engagement that will need to take place in order to address climate change adaptation. Community input into engagement is also critical given the complexity, long-term consequences and personal impacts of climate change decision-making. How Team members have valued the financial support provided.

While the How Team has largely been a success, there have been some broader challenges with the model which Council staff and How Team members are continuing to grapple with:

- A major issue for the How Team was the tight timeframe in which it had to develop the engagement plan. The tight timeframe (around nine weeks) placed considerable additional work and pressure on members of the How Team, and in particular its convenor. To ensure that engagement is meaningful, there is a need to ensure that adequate time is made available – both for getting the process of engagement right, and then undertaking engagement with the community.
- The tension between only advising on the 'how', and not straying into providing feedback on substantive options. The How Team envisages this tension becoming even more challenging in the

context of looking at climate change adaptation, given the lack of a policy framework that defines what the parameters of a discussion about adaptation are. (This is discussed in further detail below).

- Working out how to give weight to different community perspectives (also outlined in further detail below). This includes working out how to incorporate the perspectives of the wider ratepayer base that doesn't live in the area. A related challenge is ensuring that How Team members don't stray too far into representing the views of particular networks or demographics, given team members' roles are not representative.
- The need for members of the community to build relationships across multiple levels of the agency. While the How Team members have developed strong relationships with Christchurch City Council's Engagement Manager, the team members have limited relationships with officers in more senior management positions and elected members. Having senior managers participate in, and elected members observe, some How Team meetings have gone some way to establishing connections between decision-makers and the Team.

Generally, the How Team model is viewed as having been effective in supporting Christchurch City Council to build relationships and trust with the Southshore and South New Brighton communities. It has helped the Council to engage in a genuine and meaningful way with the community.

Engagement on adaptation to climate change and coastal hazards

Now that engagement around options for addressing earthquake legacy issues is largely complete, the Council's focus has shifted to working out how it will engage with communities across the Christchurch District to develop options for adapting to climate change and coastal hazards. That engagement has not yet started in earnest and, to date, the Council's engagement with communities on climate change and coastal hazards has been limited to discussing both issues in the context of addressing earthquake legacy issues.

Despite the context of Regenerate Christchurch having intended to address climate change adaptation and coastal hazard issues with the Southshore and South New Brighton communities through the proposed Regeneration Strategy, Christchurch City Council staff are of the view that developing a plan for adapting to climate change should not be limited to the Southshore and South New Brighton communities alone. Instead, Council staff believe that a number of other coastal communities should be identified for engagement

and planning participation. This is in part in recognition of the fact that other coastal communities in Christchurch have adaptation needs. But it is also intended to affirm to the Southshore and South New Brighton community that it is not the only community in Christchurch that is viewed as facing significant long-term challenges. Some members of that community do have a sense that they have received inequitable treatment by government agencies in the years after the earthquakes.

The staff that are now working on developing Christchurch City Council's climate change adaptation engagement programme have been involved in earthquake legacy issues engagement. Some have also previously been involved in engagement around red-zoning decisions and have a strong sense of the need to be cognisant of community concerns and needs, and the impacts of engagement on community well-being. But there are a number of challenges, many beyond Christchurch City Council and its staff's control, that are making the development of the adaptation engagement programme difficult.

Key engagement challenges

In addition to the main challenges outlined above, like many other councils, Christchurch City Council staff are grappling with challenges around provision and communication of information, keeping on top of considerable amounts of research material, identifying appropriate contacts within the Ministry for the Environment (and other central government agencies) to seek direction on adaptation from, and how to sustain community interest in engagement on climate change adaptation over protracted periods of time (balanced against community expectations that actions to ensure their resilience will be delivered promptly).

Policy settings and funding mechanisms

A major concern for Christchurch City Council staff is that they are having to plan for, and embark on, engagement with the community without a clear understanding of what the options for adaptation are, and how the costs of any adaptation measures will be met. There is no certainty as to roles and responsibilities for adaptation and no direction from the Government as to what is or isn't an acceptable adaptive action. Ultimately, there is no policy framework that defines the parameters within which the Council's engagement with the community can take place.

While starting with a blank canvas and embarking on blue-sky thinking might be aspirational, the current policy vacuum creates the real risk of communities being left to develop solutions that are ultimately unachievable. Members of previous How Teams

expressed concern at the lack of a policy framework around adaptation, and were strongly of the view that communities' role should not be to develop solutions from scratch, but to provide feedback on a range of defined options, and how they should be implemented. They indicated a strong preference for discussing options, as opposed to having a theoretical conversation.

There is some concern that if the policy parameters for discussions around adaptation options are not defined at a national level, conversations at the local level will be unconstrained and so go nowhere, frustrating communities and further eroding their trust in central and local government agencies. Council staff are particularly concerned that engagement without any policy framework in place will create unrealistic expectations for communities, particularly around how the costs of adaptation will be met. There is concern about ad hoc approaches being taken across the country, creating expectations around precedent setting. Without clear policy positions, there is a risk that an expectation that anything and everything is up for grabs will be created.

For Christchurch communities in particular, the lack of a clearly defined policy framework that informs community engagement is at odds with the experience they've had post-earthquakes. In that context, engagement has typically taken place around a proposed set of options, with the focus of engagement often around discussing the detail of options, and how they would be implemented. Although the earthquake issues that Christchurch's communities have been engaged on have been complex and controversial, the clear definition of the parameters for those conversations has helped to keep engagement focused and constructive, and ultimately deliver outcomes.

A clearly defined policy framework would also better support the Council's staff to properly scope and plan for engagement with the community. With so many unknowns, Council staff are finding it difficult at this stage to work out how much resourcing is needed to undertake the engagement, and therefore how to scope these project costs.

Recognising the true costs of meaningful community engagement

To date, Christchurch City Council has only utilised the How Team model in Southshore and South New Brighton. It has some reservations about rolling the model out in other parts of the community, largely due to the considerable cost of supporting the model (financially and from a time and resourcing point of view). There are also valid questions about how effectively a How Team model would work in parts of the city that are less well networked than Southshore and South New Brighton.

Council staff are working hard to shift the perception that the costs associated with engagement, including costs associated with adopting a model such as the How Team, are significant and perhaps unnecessary. Council staff recognise the need for meaningful engagement with the community if decisions are to be sustainable. Central government should also emphasise through things such as the *Coastal Hazards Guidance* the importance of investing in community engagement, particularly for ensuring positive community well-being outcomes and sustainable decision-making. The How Team model could be referenced in that Guidance as an example of a community engagement model that can be adopted, to encourage the approach to be rolled out across other parts of the country.

Community well-being considerations

Through involvement in ongoing engagement with the community on earthquake legacy issues, Council staff are very aware of the impacts that community engagement and government agency decision-making can have on communities' well-being. Council staff are particularly cognisant of the psycho-social impacts of decisions that bear on people's sense of place and ownership of assets.

The *Coastal Hazards Guidance* largely fails to address community well-being. It doesn't provide any guidance as to how the psycho-social impacts of community engagement around something as complex, potentially life-changing and uncertain as climate change should be addressed. There are no practical examples of things that councils can do to ensure community well-being when engaging on adaptation.

In the content of long-term climate change decision-making, Council staff are particularly concerned about the impacts of uncertainty on people's psycho-social well-being, and how best to address those impacts in the content of decision-making that has a much longer-term focus.

Staff are also concerned about the well-being impact of triggers, which the Dynamic Adaptive Planning Pathways approach places considerable emphasis on. There is some concern that waiting for triggers to take effect leaves communities in limbo, creating uncertainty as to what decisions should be taken and when. This uncertainty, the anxiety that comes with it, and how to address this, isn't adequately dealt with in the *Coastal Hazards Guidance*.

Related to this issue is that Council staff recognise the need to make support available for community well-being. In previous engagement around earthquake legacy issues, central and local government

agencies have made support to communities available through provision of access to social services (such as having Salvation Army attend community meetings to provide support to communities), and through provision of basic support such as opportunities to network with other members of the community over a cup of tea. As noted above, the costs of providing these critical support services aren't always readily factored into budgets or easy to access. The *Coastal Hazards Guidance* should make reference to the need for resourcing of this kind of support to be provided.

Ensuring adequate weight is given to community perspectives

A key challenge for Christchurch City Council staff, which was also a challenge for members of the How Teams that advised on earthquake legacy issue engagement, is how much weight to give to the different voices of the community that participate in engagement.

In the context of addressing earthquake legacy issues, Christchurch City Council's engagement didn't extend significantly beyond working directly with Southshore and South New Brighton communities. That meant that the primary concerns raised through engagement largely related to protection of private property. However, in the context of adapting to climate change, where the costs of adaptation are likely to be significant, and may need to be met through contributions from Christchurch's wider rating base, Council staff acknowledge that there is likely to be a need to engage with the wider community on what adaptation for Southshore and South New Brighton (and other relevant parts of the city) looks like. How much weight should be given to the voices of those residents that live in exposed areas, relative to the voices of the wider rating base, is still a matter of debate.

Given the proximity of Southshore and South New Brighton to the coast and the estuary, there is considerable interest from certain members of that community (as well as the wider Christchurch community) in ensuring that the ecological values of the area are protected. This has been raised during engagement on earthquake legacy issues. Some members of the community struggle with the need to take ecological considerations into account, relative to others such as economic and social. Again, Council staff do not have clarity or clear direction on how to give appropriate weight to these differing perspectives.

MfE's *Coastal Hazards Guidance* is light on advice on how to give appropriate weight to the varying perspectives that will emerge through engagement on adaptation options. Christchurch City Council staff, and members of the community that will ultimately advise on or participate in engagement, would benefit from clarity. A consistent approach to weighting voices in the engagement process would also help to alleviate some of the Council's concerns around liability risk for failing to adequately take views into account.

Summary

Christchurch City Council's engagement on climate change and coastal hazards with the Southshore and South New Brighton communities, as well as other coastal communities, is in the planning stage. With the lessons learned from engaging with communities on earthquake legacy issues, Council staff have some concerns about how they will ensure engagement on climate change adaptation doesn't result in negative psycho-social impacts and community wellbeing outcomes. More national direction would be helpful, as currently the lack of policy framework for climate change adaptation is creating significant challenges for managing the impacts of uncertainty on wellbeing, for planning meaningful engagement, and for decision-making.

6 >

**Case Study
3: Dunedin
City Council –
South Dunedin**

Case Study 3: Dunedin City Council – South Dunedin

Introduction

South Dunedin is a vibrant, diverse and densely populated part of the city, and home to around 10,000 people. It is a major infrastructure and recreation hub. Geographically, it is central, flat and convenient, which is valued by many people, particularly older residents and those with mobility issues. As well as the positives, the area also has some challenges. South Dunedin has significant areas of poverty and poor-quality housing. It is also a low-lying coastal area, built on land largely reclaimed from a coastal wetland. Flooding problems are exacerbated by high groundwater levels and additional surface water flowing into the area from the surrounding hills.

South Dunedin's susceptibility to flooding was highlighted on 3 June 2015, when significant, widespread and prolonged flooding took place. Images of that flood event remain well-etched in many people's minds – both locally and nationally. Those images have become symbolic of the increasing extreme weather events that New Zealand faces. An estimated 2,000 homes and businesses were affected by the 2015 flood event.

The flood was the result of the second-highest recorded 24-hour rainfall in Dunedin since a disastrous flood in 1923. Such events are predicted to become more frequent as a result of climate change. However, an alternative view of what caused the 2015 flood soon emerged within the South Dunedin community – that its sole cause was the failure of Dunedin City Council's infrastructure. Several years later, some members of the community remain of the view that climate change and the flood event are completely unrelated.

Dunedin City Council has since acknowledged that while the flood was caused by the sheer volume of rain that fell, some of its infrastructure wasn't working as well as it should. The infrastructure issues didn't cause the flood but did make it worse.

Since 2015, Dunedin City Council, in collaboration with Otago Regional Council, has been working directly with the South Dunedin community to deliver a programme of work known as South Dunedin Future, outlined in further detail below. A considerable focus of the Council's engagement with the South Dunedin community to date has been rebuilding the community's trust, particularly those members of the community still coming to terms with the notion of climate change, and its likely impacts on the area.

Background

What is the South Dunedin Future Project?

The *South Dunedin Future Programme* (SDF Programme) is focused on helping members of the community and key stakeholders to understand what is happening in South Dunedin, build community resilience, and identify options and opportunities for adapting to the changing climate. But the Programme takes a broader focus than climate change alone. It is also focused on working with the community to identify opportunities for urban regeneration and improving wellbeing outcomes through areas such as housing and urban design.

Ultimately, through the Programme the Council will support South Dunedin's community over the long term to develop an adaptation plan and dynamic adaptive policy pathways for the area. In addition to this long-term focus, the SDF Programme has focused on delivering near- and medium-term interventions that will help to mitigate (but not eliminate) flooding issues in South Dunedin.

The Council has also supported the development of South Dunedin's own locally-driven Community Response Plan and assisted the community to build up resilience before extreme weather events unfold.

How is the Council engaging with the South Dunedin community?

A large number of Dunedin City Council staff are working on the SDF Programme, and as part of their work are engaging with members of the South Dunedin community. The Programme is sponsored by the Council's Corporate Policy Team and is overseen by a Steering Group of senior staff from both Dunedin City and Otago Regional Councils. Most of the staff working on the Programme have various other day-to-day responsibilities, which they balance with work on the SDF Programme. Staff from a wide range of teams – from Policy to Communications to Three Waters to Community Development – are working on the Programme.

The Council is engaging with members of the South Dunedin community in a range of ways. It has engaged directly with the community through traditional methods such as door knocking and mail drops. Council staff have also sought to attend regularly scheduled meetings of pre-existing community groups, such as churches and clubs, to engage with members of the community in the spaces that they feel comfortable. These types of engagement are resource-intensive, and so due to considerable resource constraints (despite the significant resources that the Council has dedicated to the SDF Programme), the Council also leverages opportunities facilitated by the South Dunedin Community Network (SDCN) to engage with the community.

The SDCN was established following various community hui that took place following the 2015 flood event. The network's purpose is to, "make connections and help people use their voice to create a vibrant and safe future together in South Dunedin." The SDCN's goals include advocating for, celebrating, connecting the people and communities of, and communicating with and being informed by the people who live and work in, South Dunedin. It has specific objectives of ensuring all South Dunedin residents' voices are heard and included in future planning and action, and bringing together residents and decision-makers to share information and connect with one another. One of the ways these objectives are fulfilled is via regular community hui. Although the network's purpose and focus is much broader than simply responding to and preparing for climate change, the SDCN is committed to highlighting this issue with its community.

Dunedin City Council and Otago Regional Council staff regularly participate in the SDCN's community hui, so they can update residents on a wide range of council work programmes, answer questions, seek feedback, participate in group-based discussions and share some kai with residents. While the hui aren't exclusively climate change-specific forums, Council staff have used the hui as a means of beginning conversations with the community about what a response to climate change might look like. As well as being active participants in the community hui, the Dunedin City Council supports and enables the work of the SDCN, including through the provision of funding, use of community space and other tangible resources.

Engagement challenges

Dunedin City Council's engagement with the South Dunedin community is now generally viewed as progressing well, partly due to the effective relationship it has established with the SDCN. But despite that relationship, and the considerable resource the Council has dedicated to the Programme, there are a number of issues and limitations that are making the Council's engagement with the community a challenge. Those issues and limitations are the core focus of this case study.

Resourcing and the need for specialist engagement staff

Despite the considerable number of staff working to some extent on the SDF Programme, there are only a handful of dedicated staff working exclusively on it. Engaging additional, dedicated staff to work on the Programme would place considerable pressure on the Council's already constrained operational budgets. Substantial increases to the operating expenditure associated with the Programme would ultimately require the Council to increase rates, or make cuts in other areas of its business. So, while it appears that

the Council has allocated considerable resource to its engagement with the South Dunedin community, there are still concerns within the Programme's Steering Group that the Programme is still under-resourced given its magnitude and significance. There is limited capacity for the Programme's funding to increase.

Council staff with more technical roles (such as engineers and natural hazards specialists) are having to think about and change the way they communicate scientific or technical information. While those staff have had the advantage of having considerable amounts of information and research to draw on (including from agencies such as the University of Otago and GNS Science, with which the Council has developed constructive relationships), the challenge of how much and what kind of information communities want to access has been difficult. The community's needs and expectations are often quite different than those of the decision-makers to whom council staff are accustomed to providing information. At one of the SDCN hui, members of the community indicated to Council and external technical experts speaking on South Dunedin's exposure to climate change risk that they did not understand the information being shared with them. Council staff have had limited examples of good public science communication to draw upon, given academic and scientific research tends to be geared towards experts and decision-makers, and not the general public. There is also no guidance around how to manage the psychosocial impacts of disseminating information about climate change.

The Council, and particularly the Programme's Steering Group, know that community engagement cannot be a one-off exercise. For engagement to be effective, ongoing and regular follow-up discussions with the community, in the spaces that are familiar and comfortable to them, are critical. Not being able to sustain sufficient and ongoing engagement with the South Dunedin community would create risks of momentum and goodwill being lost.

While the Council hasn't yet experienced significant pushback from members of the wider community on the engagement work it is doing in South Dunedin, and does have a sense its ratepayer base understands the urgent need for efforts to be prioritised in South Dunedin, that hasn't been strongly tested. The real test will likely come when the Council is at such a point that it needs to make decisions around large investments for South Dunedin, and as other parts of the district become more affected by climate change. But without more dedicated resource to work on climate change-specific community engagement, the Council has been left with no choice but to prioritise allocation of resource to engagement with South Dunedin residents. This is quite possibly at the expense of engaging more closely with those other communities that may be critical for ensuring long-term and wider buy-in for decisions that may need implementing in South Dunedin.

What does good engagement look like and need?

There are limited examples of what has worked well and hasn't worked well in the climate change community engagement space for Dunedin City Council staff (and all councils) to draw upon.

There is little understanding of, or guidance on, the resourcing needed to implement the Ministry for the Environment's *Coastal Hazards Guidance for Local Government*. Without such guidance, council officers made best guesses at the outset of the Programme, and continue to make best guesses, as to the level of resourcing required. They haven't been in the position of having all of the necessary resourcing in place from the outset of the Programme.

The support of the SDCN

Dunedin City Council has been fortunate to have the SDCN's support with helping members of the community to engage with the Council, and navigate what climate change means for them. However, the SDCN's resources are limited, as is the Council's ability to provide considerably more funding or resource to the Network. The vast majority of the SDCN's work is being driven by volunteers. It has only one full-time equivalent.

The Council and SDCN, and other councils and community networks, need additional support from central government in order to be able to continuously and effectively engage with communities. Community networks will become an increasingly important platform for engagement, particularly as councils become constrained by climate change impacts being felt in a range of communities across their districts. Networks will also be critical to helping councils to properly understand the nuances of the many and varied communities that they will need to work with.

Integration with central government

While the Council wants the development of adaptation responses for South Dunedin to be driven by the community, and led at the local level, the Council has found it challenging to engage with a range of central government agencies to work on an integrated response to climate change for South Dunedin. This is making it challenging for the Council to ascertain whether its approach, and the thinking of the South Dunedin community, is consistent with central government's intentions for the area.

While there has been good engagement with, and interest shown by, individual government departments in regards to South Dunedin's long term future, Council staff have struggled to identify appropriate contacts for addressing climate change challenges in other agencies, and are concerned that they may not be fully briefed on all central government work that is of relevance to what is happening

at the local level. This has sometimes made it difficult for Council staff to properly respond to questions from the community about the national approach to climate change adaptation, or what central government is doing or plans to do.

The DCC and ORC are part of a partnership project with the Ministry for the Environment and LINZ looking at challenges in the gathering and use of technical data and information in climate change adaptation. The project is looking at what local, regional and central government can learn from the South Dunedin experience.

Liability risk

For staff working on the SDF Programme, there are a number of unresolved questions about what liability risks might arise from the short and long-term work being done. Council staff are grappling with questions such as:

- Legally, what constitutes adequate engagement with the community? Could Councils be liable if they fail to engage adequately with all or part/s of the community?
- Could Councils be found to be negligent for failing to dedicate enough resource to engagement with the community on climate change adaptation?
- On what grounds could decisions that are reached with the community around how to adapt and build community resilience be challenged?
- What are the legal implications of Councils putting out information about climate change impacts in South Dunedin (eg on hazard maps, through the publication of risk assessments, on LIMs etc)?
- Could Councils be liable for failing to adequately address climate change issues in other parts of Dunedin if they concentrate considerable effort and resource on South Dunedin's issues?
- What are Councils' liability risks if their infrastructure fails to perform in extreme weather events? Could Councils be liable for failing to upgrade their infrastructure? Could they be liable even if the community is opposed to increased costs associated with infrastructure upgrades?

These are only a sample of uncertainties that Council staff are having to think about. They are concerned that both elected members and officers don't yet have a good grasp of how potential claims may play out, what the costs and time associated with responding to them

might be, and what the Council's liabilities might look like. Working through these issues consumes staff time that could better be spent on working directly with the community. There is also fear that liability may risk and ultimately hinder the Council in making certain decisions in respect of South Dunedin that need to be made.

Despite the uncertainty, and the lack of clear legislative direction, the Council is getting on with engaging with the community and developing plans and short-term interventions for South Dunedin. This is because the Council knows there is a need to address the challenges South Dunedin faces, and that failure to do anything also presents considerable legal risk. Clarification of the uncertainties would help to provide a clearer sense of direction for council officers, elected members and the community.

Summary

Dunedin City Council has made good progress in establishing relationships with the South Dunedin community, and building a platform for engagement on climate change adaptation. Dunedin City Council and Otago Regional Council are collaborating to share resources and ensure a wise use of the limited resources, given the size of the South Dunedin community, and scale of the challenges that community is facing. Support with additional resourcing, and considerably greater integration with central government, would help the Council to engage in an even more comprehensive and meaningful way. Clarity around the legal framework as it relates to community engagement on climate change adaptation would make planning for engagement and adaptation action easier, and ensure that the Council is in a position to get on with engagement without constraint.

7 >

Recommendations

Recommendations

The three case studies reveal a number of changes to legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks, and practical measures that could be adopted at the national level that would support councils to better engage with their communities on climate change adaptation. While this set of recommendations has been informed by the work that the three case study councils are undertaking to engage with their communities on climate change adaptation and the specific challenges they are facing, LGNZ's sense is that the recommendations would provide support to all councils, regardless of where they are at with their engagement on adaptation.

Policy direction

1. Central government work with local government to establish a clear policy framework for climate change adaptation, including by addressing the allocation of roles and responsibilities, and defining funding arrangements, for adaptation action. The framework should identify a flexible and wide-ranging set of options for adapting to climate change.
2. Central and local government to explore options for the establishment of a centralised service to provide expertise to local government for consistent risk-based decision-making. The design of this service should draw on LGNZ's business case for a Local Government Risk Agency, and Action 13 contained in the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group's report, *Adapting to Climate Change in New Zealand: Recommendations from the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group*.

Resourcing

3. Central government establish a contestable Climate Change Adaptation Community Engagement Fund, to support councils to undertake engagement on adapting to climate change, by making funding available for additional resourcing such as engaging specialist engagement staff, technical experts or commissioning advice. Preference should be given to councils embarking on significant engagement projects, and smaller councils with less resource seeking to put an engagement project in place. Councils that receive funding should be required to share lessons learnt from their engagement process via a reporting back mechanism, with these lessons to be shared widely with councils and central government agencies.
4. Central government to establish and fund a roving team of experts, including technical and engagement experts, to provide additional support to councils around community engagement on adaptation. Access to the team of experts should be on a contestable basis, with preference given to those councils already embarking on significant engagement projects, and smaller councils with less resource seeking to put an engagement project in place.
5. Central and local government to work jointly to develop a business case for a knowledge transfer mechanism that creates opportunities for central and local government experts to be brought together to work jointly on climate change engagement at local and regional levels. The mechanism should be project-based and aim to share expertise, build detailed knowledge on engagement and implementation challenges and how to overcome them, as well as strengthen key relationships across agencies.
6. Central government to establish a contestable fund, which community groups and networks can apply to for additional resourcing of grassroots, community-driven climate change adaptation engagement initiatives and/or projects.

Guidance and direction

7. Ministry for the Environment to revise its Coastal Hazards Guidance by providing additional guidance and direction on:
 - a. resources required to implement the Guidance, including time, staff resource and costs associated with implementation. This guidance should draw on the experience of councils that have already undertaken engagement processes informed by the Coastal Hazards Guidance;
 - b. Examples of models for engaging with communities (such as the How Team model), and costs associated with adopting these models. The Guidance should emphasise the importance of comprehensive community engagement, and investment in this; and
 - c. Examples of costs of implementation of adaptation initiatives, such as costs associated with relocating landfills, managing the retreat of communities or putting in place protective structures etc. These examples should draw on examples of a wide range of measures/work already undertaken by councils or central government agencies.
8. Ministry for the Environment to revise the Coastal Hazards Guidance to provide further direction on factoring community well-being into community engagement and adaptation planning. Specific advice around how to avoid negative psycho-social consequences as a result of engagement and planning processes, and in particular the uncertainty associated with climate change adaptation planning, should be provided.
9. Ministry for the Environment revise the Coastal Hazards Guidance to provide clarity around the level of engagement required at each step of the process, including more direction as to what constitutes sufficient engagement at each step of the process. This should include direction on how to give weight to diverse voices in the engagement process, including the perspectives of those directly affected and those indirectly affected (ie the extent to which engagement with the wider community should occur), and, for example, how to give weight to ecological and environmental concerns relative to social and economic concerns.

Central government partnerships

10. Central government to establish a single point of contact for councils through which relationships with relevant agencies can be brokered. That single point of contact should identify for councils the relevant contacts within government agencies for a range of matters that relate to climate change adaptation.
11. Ministry for the Environment to establish a platform through which councils can ask questions or seek clarification on how to implement the Coastal Hazards Guidance, with Ministry officials and councils able to respond to questions.
12. Community resilience agencies to consider with local government opportunities for inclusion of work specific to community engagement in the joint central and local government community resilience work programme, including work to advance some of the recommendations contained in this report.

Information and communication

13. Ministry for the Environment and Land Information New Zealand, in conjunction with NIWA and the Deep South National Science Challenge, to develop guidance for councils on how to communicate scientific and technical information to communities, including by providing best practice examples of community-centric science communication, and a series of questions councils can ask communities to ascertain the type and amount of information they want access to. This guidance should address psycho-social considerations associated with communication of uncertain or complex climate change information.
14. Central government to support local government with the establishment of a panel of independent experts (including technical, scientific, planning, policy and legal) which councils can access to support their work on adaptation, and engagement with communities.
15. LGNZ to work with central government agencies to develop a portal for sharing information on climate change adaptation, including data sets, research, best practice guidance and examples of adaptation work underway in councils across the country.



We are. LGNZ.

Te Kāhui Kaunihera o Aotearoa.

PO Box 1214
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

P. 64 4 924 1200
www.lgnz.co.nz

We are.

Ashburton.	Gisborne.	Kaikōura.	Otago.	Southland Region.	Waimate.
Auckland.	Gore.	Kaipara.	Otorohanga.	Stratford.	Waipa.
Bay of Plenty.	Greater Wellington.	Kāpiti Coast.	Palmerston North.	Taranaki.	Wairoa.
Buller.	Grey.	Kawerau.	Porirua.	Tararua.	Waitaki.
Canterbury.	Hamilton.	Mackenzie.	Queenstown-	Tasman.	Waitomo.
Carterton.	Hastings.	Manawatu.	Lakes.	Taupō.	Wellington.
Central	Hauraki.	Marlborough.	Rangitikei.	Tauranga.	West Coast.
Hawke's Bay.	Hawke's	Masterton.	Rotorua Lakes.	Thames-	Western Bay
Central Otago.	Bay Region.	Matamata-Piako.	Ruapehu.	Coromandel.	of Plenty.
Chatham Islands.	Horizons.	Napier.	Selwyn.	Timaru.	Westland.
Christchurch.	Horowhenua.	Nelson.	South Taranaki.	Upper Hutt.	Whakatāne.
Clutha.	Hurunui.	New Plymouth.	South Waikato.	Waikato District.	Whanganui.
Dunedin.	Hutt City.	Northland.	South Wairarapa.	Waikato Region.	Whangarei.
Far North.	Invercargill.	Ōpōtiki.	Southland District.	Waimakariri.	

LGNZ.