



**8 June  
2023**



## Community update

# Piha cyclone recovery

We will be sending out this update regularly when new information related to Piha's recovery is available.

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### Have we got your details?

If you've received this newsletter via email, then we're all good – we have your correct contact details.

If it has been passed on to you by someone else or you're reading it via a website or social media channel, please [sign up via this online form](#). (Privacy and spam regulations don't allow us to use our contact details from existing council information for general communications, so if you would like to receive updates, we need you to [sign up via this online form](#).)

We hope that the information in the updates will be relevant for most community members, so please also help us spread the word on this update to your neighbours and friends in Piha.

## Changes to Piha cordons from 12 June

Last Friday (2 June) marked four weeks since the outer cordon into Piha and Karekare was removed. We had previously committed to reviewing ongoing cordon arrangements on a regular basis. Changes had been made in consultation with Auckland Transport, NZ Police, and red and yellow stickered property owners impacted by cordon arrangements. Changes detailed below will take effect from 12 noon, Monday 12 June.

### Rayner Road

The current 'hard cordon' with security staff at Rayner Road will be reduced to a 'soft cordon' (signage and barriers/cones only) until long-term remediation work is completed. Residents (and services) only access, as well as weight restrictions are to remain in place.

Remediation work has reduced the public safety risk from the over slips impacting the road, however an ongoing risk to public safety remains from the under slip and land instability. Additional geotechnical monitoring equipment also remains in place to monitor any changes. These restrictions will remain in place until long-term remediation on Rayner Road occurs.

### Marine Parade South

Marine Parade South (southern arm) 'hard cordon' (cordon with security presence) with residents (and services) only access will be shifted from its current site at 60 Beach Valley Road to 11/13 Marine Parade South. This change will allow for public access to the main carpark but will continue restrictions to the narrow and highly impacted end of Marine Parade South to help manage public safety risk from slips and remediation works. This arrangement will be reviewed again before the end of June 2023, and any changes communicated through this community update.

### Ongoing security

Roving security patrols will be in place around Piha to provide an ongoing security presence in those areas without manned cordons. This will help provide additional reassurance to the community, and particularly those property owners whose properties are unable to be occupied due to their ongoing building placard status. This arrangement will be reviewed again before the end of June 2023, and any changes communicated through this community update.

Community members are reminded to ensure houses are secure and call the Police in the first instance to report suspicious behaviour.

## Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Coordination Office – Piha drop-in clinics

Simon Fraser, Community Liaison Lead for Piha and Karekare, will be available to discuss any recovery-related issues from Cyclone Gabrielle and Auckland Anniversary weekend floods:

- Piha Community Library, 10am to 12noon, Mondays – 12, 19 and 26 June.

Can't make these sessions? Feel free to email Simon at [piha@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:piha@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).

# Risk categorisation and Geotechnical assessment update

## Funding for voluntary buy-out

On Thursday 1 June Minister Grant Robertson announced the government would support a property buyout scheme for residential properties where these are designated as “Risk Category 3” by the local council.

As part of the assurance process, an individual assessment of properties will be needed to confirm whether it is unsafe to live on.

The Risk Categories are defined in the table below:

Risk Category		Definitions	Examples
1	Low Risk	Repair to previous state is all that is required to manage future severe weather event risk.	Minor flood damage to repair but no need for significant redesign/retrofitting.
2C	Managed Risk	Community level interventions are effective in managing future severe weather event risk.	Local government repairs and enhances flood protection schemes to adequately manage the risk of future flooding events in the face of climate change effects.
2P		Property level interventions are needed to manage future severe weather event risk, including in tandem with community level interventions.	Property specific measures are necessary e.g., improved drainage, raising houses etc. Benefits accrue to property owners, but some may face affordability issues.
2A		Potential to fall within 2C/2P but significant further assessment required.	Interventions may be required and/or possible but there is insufficient information to provide an initial categorisation. (2A may subsequently move to 2C or 2P, or to categories 1 / 3.)
3	High Risk	Future severe weather event risk cannot be sufficiently mitigated. In some cases, some current land uses may remain acceptable, while for others there is an intolerable risk of injury or death.	In the face of enhanced climate risks, the property may face unacceptable risk of future flooding. Other properties could be subject to unstable land that poses an ongoing risk.

In the briefing it was noted that there were approximately 700 Category 3 properties in New Zealand, of which approximately 400 are in Auckland. These numbers for Auckland exclude landslide-affected properties as the numbers of these will not be known until our engineering consultants GHD finish their assessment work (see our [25 May community update](#) – from pg 6).

The government is aware that the numbers may change once landslide-affected properties are considered.

Auckland Council will start communicating with affected homeowners around the region starting from the week of 12 June about the assessments for risk categorisation. Because the work by GHD is still underway in our west coast communities, we will not be able to confirm which category specific properties fall into until this is completed. We are working with GHD to identify properties that can be easily categorised more quickly.

However, even once Category 3 properties have been confirmed, there is a significant process to go through to achieve any buyout and this will take a number of months to finalise.

### **What is the difference between the government’s buyout “risk categories” and Auckland Council’s Rapid Building Assessment (RBA) placard categories?**

The placards placed on properties during the council’s RBA process are different to the government’s risk categories. This is because they serve very different purposes.

The RBAs, specified by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), quickly establish how safe a building or property is, immediately following a weather event. Rapid building assessments are not an engineering assessment service, nor do they consider the long-term suitability of the location for occupation.

**The government’s risk categories are intended to assess the long-term suitability of the site.**

Because of these differences there may be red-placarded properties that fall into Categories 1 or 2, and there may be properties with no placard (or a white/yellow placard) which are identified as Category 3 once the detailed risk assessment is undertaken.

### **What is the difference between a white placard and no placard?**

Some residents have expressed concern over the potential for a white placard recorded on their Land Information Memorandum (LIM) to affect property values and have expressed a preference that this be removed to show no placard.

The council is obliged to disclose the fact that any placard has been issued on the LIM under [Section 44A](#) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

We can confirm that:

1. A white placard indicates that a building has suffered light or no damage and can be used. However, a white placard does not necessarily mean the building is safe, and owners may wish to obtain their own engineering checks.
2. White placards are automatically marked as ‘closed’ 21 days after they are issued. The LIM would then note the status of the white placard as “closed”.
3. If we confirm a placard has been recorded against a property by mistake, for example, if a placard is placed on the incorrect address, it will not be noted on any future LIMs.

### **Landslide assessment work**

The risk from landslides is very variable across Piha and Karekare. GHD needs to do further assessment before we can confirm property Risk Categories. These will be available when the GHD study is finished, which is expected to be in September. Further information about the geotechnical programmes was included in our [25 May community update](#) – starting from page 6.

GHD's landslide assessment work will define boundaries between risk categories 2 and 3 in areas where multiple homes are affected by a landslide. This includes all clusters of properties with a red or yellow placard.

In cases where GHD identifies information that the placard status of a property could be changed, a short report and placard change recommendation will be prepared for the property owner and Auckland Council. This is in lieu of the normal RBA assessment processes.

Some landowners may be able to speed up the RBA placard review process (but not the Risk Categorisation process) if they engage their own geotechnical experts for site-specific advice. Whether this is appropriate will depend on the location of the property relative to the landslide risk. We are working with GHD on defining which properties are less complex and could therefore be assessed earlier, and we expect to have a map showing these properties, in next fortnight's update.

We hope this will be useful to the community as it will help to identify where it may be worth engaging an external expert to speed up the placard downgrading process and will clarify where it would not be worth spending the additional money.

A re-placard assessment must be undertaken by a suitably qualified geotechnical professional (a chartered geotechnical engineer or a chartered engineering geologist). The owner's geotechnical professional is encouraged to contact the council directly to discuss the level of assessment they need to undertake.

For any questions regarding this work, please contact [piha@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:piha@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz). For questions relating to your RBA placard status, please contact your RBA case manager.

## **Need mental health support?**

We understand these milestones may cause some distress, so if you need support please visit the [Auckland Council website for a list of available services](#).

## **Auckland Transport (AT) update**

AT's work continues in Piha, with good progress being made. We will provide future updates to the community as information comes to hand.

## **\$1.3m paid out for rates relief**

Last week Auckland Council paid out around \$1.3 million in rates relief to properties left uninhabitable because of the flood and cyclone events.

The rates relief fund, communicated in this newsletter, was open from 18 April to 5 May and received 806 applications. Relief payments covering the full third and fourth quarter rates instalments were credited to 792 eligible rates accounts.

We are very mindful that many ratepayers have ongoing financial challenges because of the extreme weather events. If people are experiencing financial difficulties and are unable to pay their rates, we encourage them to call us on 09 301 0101 to talk through the support, payment and postponement options available to them.

## Emergency relief fund

In addition to the \$1.3 million in rates relief, the Emergency Relief Fund, opened by the Mayor on 31 January received 2539 applications by the cut-off date of 6 March.

The fund provided financial support to individuals, community groups and marae in Auckland experiencing hardship after being affected by the January 2023 Auckland Anniversary weekend flooding and was extended to those impacted by the February cyclone.

While applications to the fund was oversubscribed, the total fund raised \$3.7 million – thanks to generous donors and support from the government.

Over \$2 million has so far been paid out, with the remaining applications currently being processed for payment.

To read the full story visit [OurAuckland](#).

## Building assessments update

Updated placard status numbers in Piha as of Tuesday 6 June:

- Red 1 – 10
- Red 2 – 9
- Yellow 1 – 15
- Yellow 2 – 7
- White – 154

There are different reasons why these numbers may differ each week, including:

- If remedial action has been confirmed and approved by the council's compliance team, then the placard can be noted as closed and removed off the list.
- It is identified as a duplicate and removed.
- If was confirmed as one placard for a building with multiple postal addresses but sits in our system as one legal property.

Visit the [Auckland Council website](#) to learn more about what the placard colours mean.

## Waitākere Ranges Regional Park

Several tracks within the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park suffered significant damage, with some tracks remaining closed due to slips, damaged structures, or dangerous trees.

Our staff are continuing to assess damage and accessibility, with a view to opening more areas as soon as possible while considering the impact on locals. This includes geotechnical assessment on some tracks.

The forested area within the Waitākere Ranges remains subject to a rāhui by Te Kawerau ā Maki and our staff are working closely with Te Kawerau ā Maki to audit relevant tracks to ensure these can reopen safely. We ask the public to respect all closures and not remove any barriers or signage currently in place for their own safety, and to not add to environmental damage in the area, including the threat of spreading kauri dieback disease.

We continue to encourage visitors to check our [map of open and closed tracks](#) on the Auckland Council website before heading out.

#### Tracks that have recently reopened:

- Byers Loop (2 June)

#### Damaged tracks are likely to reopen in the short to medium term:

- Mercer Bay Loop Track
- Comans Track
- Ahu Ahu Track
- Gibbons Track
- Muir Track
- Slip Track
- Caves Track (Whatipu)

#### Damaged tracks that will not be open for some time:

- Laird Thomson Track
- Tasman lookout Track
- Marawhara Track
- White Track
- Lion Rock Track
- Lake Wainamu Track (full loop)

#### Damaged tracks awaiting geotechnical reports:

- Gannet Track / Takapu Refuge
- Quarry Track
- Lookout Track
- Edwin Mitchelson Track
- Auckland City Walk
- Knutzen and Kitekite tracks (including access to Kitekite Falls)
- Zig Zag track



Figure 1 Work underway at Mercer Bay Loop track.



#### Need help?



Visit: <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/piha-community-newsletters>  
Enquire: [piha@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:piha@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) or [rbacomms@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:rbacomms@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)



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