

Submission from Justin Johnstone

As an individual representative of the Kaiaua township and as a ratepayer of the Hauraki District Council/Waikato Regional Council, I wish to make a submission as called for in the "Local Government Funding and Financing issues paper" November 2018.

It is my goal to effect change towards the long term negative unintended effects that the LGRA/ user pays/targeted rates regime has had on my community with respect to flood protection.

I have attached relevant documents with this submission and each document has had the pertinent references highlighted for ease of browsing.

The issue of affordability of our area with lower-income and small rating base has been highlighted in the attached document "Meeting Challenges of Future Flooding in New Zealand" from 2008. My belief is that this document has highlighted the problem we face and it's recommendations towards Central Government funding is the correct approach for our community situation.

Kaiaua and the flood prone agricultural land on the western margin of the Firth of Thames was identified as a priority site for specific action due to its risk and vulnerability in 1999 also in the attached document "Coastal Flooding Risk Mitigation Strategy".

The township of Kaiaua has had long term river flooding issues and affordability issues for flood protection as the attached "report from Hauraki District Council" from 2011 that is also attached.

Since publication of these reports and studies we have had the devastating river flooding (many) and coastal flooding as identified.

Attached for reference are some of the news articles of recent times.

<https://farmersweekly.co.nz/section/other-sectors/view/sea-threat-arrives>

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/347691/last-week-s-storm-worst-in-decades-for-kaiaua>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/100650005/smashed-by-the-storm-some-kaiaua-residents-put-up-the-for-sale-signs>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/100439347/salty-sea-flood-kills-off-farmers-livelihood-in-kaiaua-area>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/100359768/devastation-in-kaiaua-as-the-sea-sweeps-through-homes>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/100370302/flooded-kaiaua-the-worst-off-area-in-hauraki-district>

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/349340/kaiaua-residents-relieved-after-storm-downgrade>

We are not alone with this situation with regards to river flood protection, as highlighted in the recent Ngongotaha Independent review of the devastating floods from April 2018.

It appears that flood protection and river management are funded by a targeted rate by most regional councils and affordability is of great concern.

Although recent times has seen the Waikato Regional Council and the Hauraki District Council put significant efforts into a combined approach towards a solution, funding is a huge problem we are facing going forwards.

I have attached the 2017 report for the Ministry of the Environment "Preparing for Coastal Change" which highlights the addition burden of climate change and sea level rise. Although Kaiaua and the coastline to Miranda may appear as just another community with flood protection and coastal flooding issues, it is indeed the last portion of the well protected Hauraki Plains to require stop banking to protect the 35,000 hectares of productive fertile land from tidal flooding.

I would like the Productivity Commission to consider the following changes.

1/ Create a funding mechanism where communities with lower-income and small rating bases who have have an identified long term exposure to significant natural hazards are able to have a financial safety net offered by Central Government to assist in achieving a solution with regards to natural hazards such as flood protection.

2/ Consider the stop banking of the Hauraki Plains as "Nationally important infrastructure" such as with state highways and as such it to be funded by Central Government for the years ahead when it's upgrade for sea level rise is needed.