MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
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Progress following weather event destruction

Marlborough Communities have pulled together in the wake of August's destructive floods and resulting property damage.

The Branch River Bridge on State Highway 63 following the weather event on Saturday 20 August

Mayor John Leggett said the response teams had found many communities had rallied together.

"The damage is spread over a far wider area than last July's event. Many in our community have been in this position before and while it is not welcome or wanted, it is incredible to see how our people are pulling together," he said.

Emergency Management Minister, Hon Kieran McAnulty, visited the region twice, firstly on Monday 22 August and then again on Thursday 25 August to see the damage to our region first-hand.

Since the rain event, emergency teams have helped with the delivery of medication and other essential items to communities around the Marlborough region including Canvastown, Rai Valley and the isolated Marlborough Sounds including d'Urville Island, Port Underwood and Okiwi Bay.

Rapid assessments of buildings have also been carried out by assessors and geotech engineers who travelled by helicopter and boat to assess homes in the Marlborough Sounds.

Crews have worked tirelessly on roads and, subject to weather and a Civil Defence approval, State Highway 6 between Nelson and Blenheim is set to open tomorrow, albeit with restrictions in place.

Mayor, John Leggett, says the effort by Waka Kotahi and all contractors involved has been huge and the re-establishing of the vital link, State Highway 6 between Blenheim and Nelson will be very welcome once achieved.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank all those working to bring that to fruition. We know how crucial these transport links are to our communities and businesses in both regions," he said.

Work was also progressing on State Highway 63 through the Wairau Valley and while damage was significant, contractors were continuing to clear debris to allow better access to damaged areas.

Subsidy for Sounds' water taxis established

Marlborough District Council, with funding support, will subsidise water taxi services for residents, workers and visitors to areas in the Marlborough Sounds that were previously accessible by road.

Port Marlborough has also announced that they will assist the community with free car parking and free two-hour visitor berthing in the Havelock and Picton Marinas until the end of September.

Recovery Manager, Dean Heiford, said he was pleased to be able to extend the subsidy to help the areas affected. There is a possibility the services could be expanded once more of an understanding of the resources available and demands are known.

"The subsidy is $25 per passenger per trip for scheduled and pre-booked services. Bookings can be made directly with water taxi service providers and also through the Marlborough i-SITE, which is open 7 days, or by calling 0800 777 181, or by visiting their website: https://marlboroughnz.com/AugustWeatherTransport/," Mr Heiford said.

In addition to the per passenger subsidy, Marlborough District Council will also subsidise 50 per cent of each grocery and essential supplies delivery cost to those residents who can no longer travel by road.

"We will continually review the demand and services in order to meet the needs of the community as best as we can," Mr Heiford said.

"I encourage residents to coordinate travel times, if possible, to make water taxi trips as efficient as possible. Please be mindful there will be some niggles as we introduce these services, so bear with us as our teams do their best to assist our communities," he said.

The water taxi subsidy is separate to the barge service subsidy.

Mayoral relief fund

Marlborough Mayor John Leggett has established a Mayoral Relief Fund to assist the region in its recovery effort following the recent weather event.

The fund will be primarily available to Marlborough District Council area residents who have suffered personal, financial or emotional hardship because of the August 2022 Marlborough rain event.

People wishing to donate to this fund can do so online via online banking. Simply add the Marlborough District Council's account number: 02-0600-0202861-00 and include 'Mayoral Fund' as a reference.

The Mayoral Relief Fund has been approved as a donee organisation, meaning donations are tax deductible.

Please contact floodrelief.applications@marlborough.govt.nz for further information about the fund.

Recovery Manager, Dean Heiford, talks to Emergency Management Minister, Kieran McAnulty about the regions move into the recovery phase

Marlborough moves into recovery

While life has returned to normal for many in the Marlborough region, for those communities still isolated because of the major damage caused, or for property owners left dealing with the severe damage left behind, there is still a long haul ahead.

The State of Emergency declaration lifted at 4.30pm on Friday 26 August to coincide with the transition to recovery stage.

In signing the recovery transition notice Marlborough Mayor John Leggett said it was a crucial step as the region begins to recover.

"It has been a big couple of weeks for Marlborough in terms of the response to the recent weather event. I want to acknowledge everyone who has been involved," Mayor Leggett said.

"The recovery is going to be a long haul. It will be complex, and it will require input from several key agencies at a local and national level. We know many of our local roads, particularly in the Marlborough Sounds, will be inaccessible or affected for some time to come."

"Rest assured we will do all we can to get our communities connected again as quickly as possible, but it is going to take time. And there will need to be some big decisions made about roading in our region on this journey," Mayor Leggett said.

Recovery Manager, Dean Heiford, says this will likely be the biggest recovery ever faced in the region.

"Recovery agencies will continue to work to assess, repair and clear local roads to enable access in and out of affected communities. This will take some time as access challenges remain in parts of the region, particularly in the Marlborough Sounds," Mr Heiford said.