

Regional community to benefit from 3D mapping data

The first set of high-resolution 3D mapping data for the Marlborough region has been released as part of the Provincial Growth Fund LiDAR elevation data capture project.

The data, which includes the Marlborough Sounds, will deliver a range of benefits for the region, including supporting coastal ecosystem management and forestry planning.

Marlborough District Council is one of ten regions partnering with Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand to obtain a baseline elevation data set. Co-funding from the Provincial Growth Fund is supporting the regional expansion of Toitū Te Whenua's 3D mapping programme to provide a significant increase in national coverage.

"The new LiDAR data will be a game changer for farming and forestry," said Council Environmental Scientist Matt Oliver.

"Now foresters will be able to better plan their harvests to reduce environmental risks. LiDAR can also help farmers' understanding of erosion risks on-farm and help with farm planning.

"Council has already used the data to evaluate debris flow risk from steep catchments and help with mapping soils in Marlborough Sounds' valleys. The data will also be used to better understand natural hazard risks such as flooding and landslides.

"This is especially relevant after the recent storm event."

Alongside data from recent high-tech marine surveys jointly undertaken by Toitū Te Whenua and the Council, the elevation data completes the 3D picture of the Marlborough Sounds' coastal ecosystem.

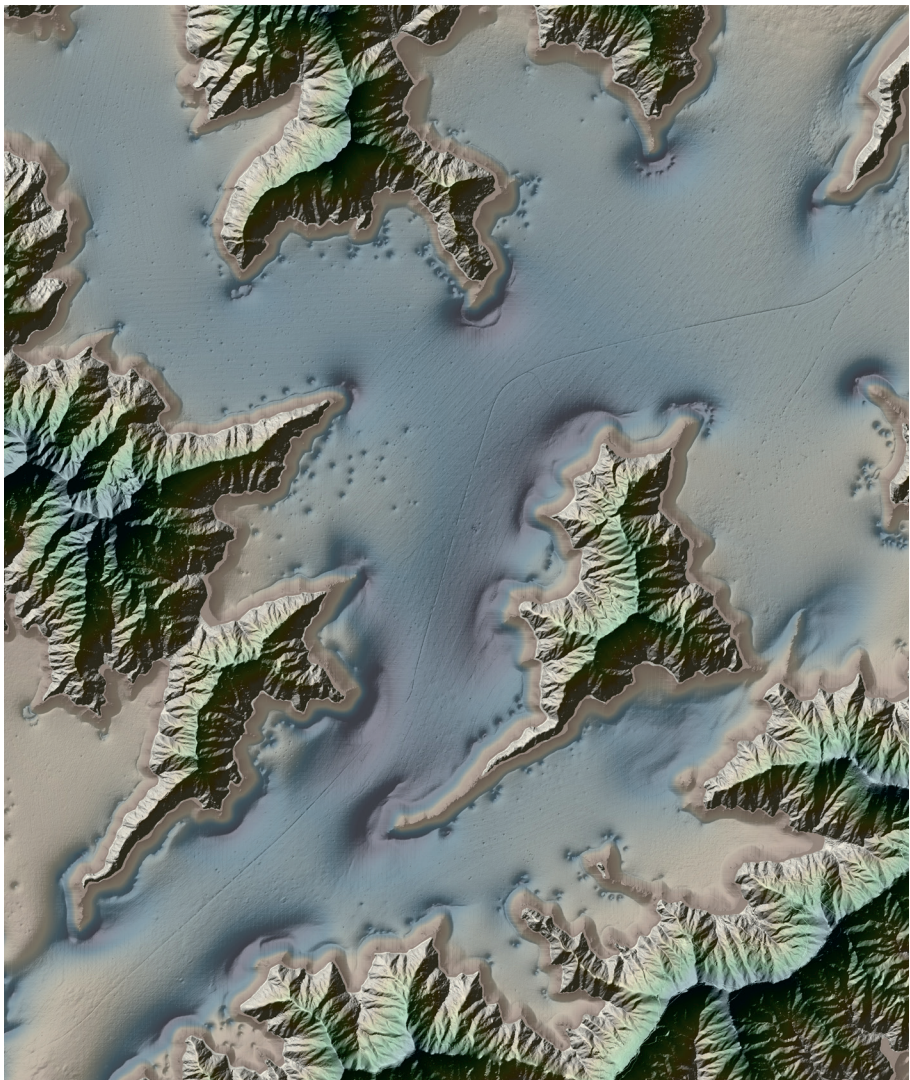
"The LiDAR coverage will enable Council and landowners to better understand the topography of our region, in the same way that the undersea data has helped us to manage and protect the Marlborough Sounds marine area," said Mr Oliver.

"Covering 40 per cent of the Marlborough region, including the entire Marlborough Sounds, this makes a significant contribution to the national LiDAR elevation data set," said Toitū Te Whenua's Group Manager Topography Ben Doherty-Jones.

"At the moment, our LiDAR data coverage across the country sits at about 20 percent. We expect to have around 80 per cent coverage by 2024 when the PGF-LiDAR elevation data capture project is due to be completed," he added.

The first Marlborough data set from the project is now publicly available at: www.data.linz.govt.nz

LiDAR data for the rest of the Marlborough region will be released as it becomes available.



Elevation model showing ground heights and water depths in Queen Charlotte Sound/ Tōtaranui, Marlborough

Preservation of life, access, then restoration, the focus of recovery efforts

Safety must come first.

That's the message being delivered loud and clear from those working hard to re-connect Marlborough Sounds and Awatere Valley communities still isolated after the July 17 storm in Marlborough.

Marlborough Roads Recovery Manager Steve Murrin said access could not be restored until safety thresholds were met. "Once we meet these safety requirements, then we can progress access. We are still in response mode in parts of the Marlborough region, particularly in the Marlborough Sounds," he said.

"Safety is an issue, for the public and for our work crews. Until we have confidence that a road is safe, we cannot open it, even for restricted access. Just because someone can drive on a road, this does not make it safe."

"Queen Charlotte Drive, Kenepuru Road and its many side roads, and the Awatere Valley Road are still fragile. Our priorities as a roading recovery team are preservation of life, then access, then restoration," said Mr Murrin.

Nearly 200 residents, property owners and businesses affected by the current closure of the Kenepuru Road, and its many associated side roads, dialled in to a Zoom meeting last Friday to hear the latest information available.

Members of the Council's Marlborough Recovery Team, Marlborough Roads Recovery Team, Mayor John Leggett, Councillors and the Council's Chief Executive Mark Wheeler were also present.

The cost of getting all damaged roads back to a safe condition to allow access - including Queen Charlotte Drive, Kenepuru Road and associated side roads, Kaiuma Bay Road, the Awatere Valley Road, Northbank Road and the Waihopai Valley Road - is likely to cost the region an estimated \$20 million. Engineers have completed early assessments from the initial flooding event to understand the extent of the damage. However, risk and slips change with each weather event, and Spring showers are on the way.

The statistics keep growing as the recovery effort continues - the latest tally of faults in the network is 1,100 with 49,000 cubic metres of spill material now removed. "More than 400 of these faults are on the Kenepuru Road. We have 60 complex sites identified across the network and 38 of these are also on the Kenepuru Road and 16 on Queen Charlotte Drive," said Mr Murrin.

"The move to Alert Level 3 Covid meant we were able to increase the number of crews working across the district. Numbers are now up to pre-lockdown levels with around 130 staff back on the ground," he said.



Cullen Point on Queen Charlotte Drive near Havelock is one of a number of complex sites around the region being worked on; these photos show the progress to date