

**Presentation to TRIC by Milford Residents Assn, Co-chairs Debbie Dunsford and Norma Bott , Thursday, 3 April 2025, 9.30am**

Mr Chairman, Mayor and Councillors

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the effects of the January 2023 flood on Milford’s families, property owners and the entire community.

The Wairau Catchment Project, together with the buyout process, we believe, is a watershed recognition of the severity of Wairau flooding issues. It is an essential project and the Wairau is a special case because of the size of the catchment and the large number of homes and businesses at ongoing risk.

As we understand it, the proposal is to lower the Wairau flood plain by converting part of Takapuna Golf Course into a wetland and flood retention area, to hold back flood waters from Glenfield for a time during an event. We understand and are sympathetic to the objection of golfers who will lose part of their public amenity. However, Milford was one of the communities worst affected by the 2023 floods. 131 homes have been designated Cat 3; those families continue to experience trauma, distress and now dislocation over two long years. Hundreds more experienced less severe but still traumatic flooding. We feel this large scale project of flood prevention is imperative and cannot be scaled back or delayed.

At a time when 1 in 100 year floods are predicted to become 1 in 25 year events, the Wairau project needs to deliver the fullest degree of flood prevention proposed and not a half-measure. We support the efforts of Council to bring about a workable and cost-effective solution to the long term problem of the Wairau.

Our goal in speaking here today is to support a project that will enable Milford residents along the Wairau to feel that they and their homes are safe.

Milford’s position on the lower Wairau means it receives water from the whole catchment. At its peak on 27 January, the volume of water flowing down the culvert from Wairau to Kitchener Roads was double the culvert’s capacity.

(Slide showing numbers Cat 3) Some of the numbers in the categorisation process illustrate that intensity of flooding in Milford:

<b>Category 3 properties to 20 March 2025</b>	
<b>Suburbs with over 40 Category 3 properties</b>	
Milford	131
Muriwai (Cyclone Gabrielle)	68
Henderson	62
Epsom	59
Mount Roskill	58
Ranui	49
Swanson	44

The latest update of property registrations for categorisation show Milford represents 5.6% of total registrations across Auckland but 11.7% of properties designated Category 3. Milford is over-represented in severely flood damaged properties. And without a comprehensive plan to mitigate Wairau flooding, Cat. 3 land and neighbouring homes will continue to be at high risk. It is clear to us that a Wairau Catchment Project is a necessity and must do the job properly.

### **Wairau flooding – a 100 year problem**

(Slide flooding 1928) The Wairau has a long history of flooding in Milford. Photo taken 23 July 1928 of Wolsley Ave, Milford. The flood was a common enough occurrence not to be reported in the newspapers.

(Slide showing July 1953 flooding of Nile Road) Flooding along Nile Road was common during the 1950s. Perhaps, this was the time house building should have been restricted in this area. Instead, in the decades since, infill housing and intensification has packed houses ever more tightly, as well as motorway construction and the Wairau industrial area covering the original flood plain up-stream with concrete.

### **Summary** (slide with bullet points)

Milford people have experienced first-hand or witnessed through family and friends the ongoing trauma connected to that night. We all know families whose homes were flooded. It was not just the flooding, but then the clean-up, dealing with insurance companies, making repairs and ongoing emotional distress and difficult decisions. Later, those most severely flooded have gone through the lengthy categorisation process, accepting the need to move, maybe away from Milford. Families thought they were in their forever homes, with friends and community around them, children in local schools. But 27 January changed that dramatically for 131 Milford households ... and counting.

We are speaking here today on behalf of the Milford community and request Councillors to support the business case for Wairau flood prevention.

(Slide of Milford flood response activities)