

**Hororata
Community Response Team's (Civil Defense)**

**Response to Mayoral letter of 23 March 2023
& DoC letter 8 March from the Supervisor,
BioDiversity DOC**

13 April 2023

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**March 2023, Top end Duncans Road –
A severe, damaging flood waiting to happen**

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1.1. Introduction

We write on behalf of the Hororata Community, regarding potentially disastrous consequences following a severe flood.

We appreciated the opportunity to present thoughts very briefly at the Monday 27th March at the Malvern Community Board meeting.

With respect to our responses in this document, please take another look at our proposals outlined in August 2022 ¹.

This document seeks to address matters raised in the Mayoral letter (23rd March 2023) and in the DOC response from Craig Alexander to Nicola Grigg – 8th March.

Seven priorities have been identified by SDC for action regarding flood mitigation, pre-winter (we assume 2023).

Here's our response. We request discussion and a plan that involves our community – our experience and our priorities. We believe that as local ratepayers with local experience, we should have important input. (Our priorities, listed in the August 2022 document appear to be mostly disregarded.

With priority setting, we understand that ecological and budget constraints must be considered.

We request a costing please for the items under consideration. What is the total budget allocated for this work, in next 12 months?

Please update us on the permissions both requested and granted to do work in our river systems that impact on mudfish and home owners.

1.2. Mudfish and villager priorities for warm and DRY homes

As homeowners our priority is to have government mandated (for tenants) warm and dry homes.

Our sense is that mudfish take higher priority than people.

When priorities are weighted too far towards mudfish care, the results are well known by our flood affected community. **Floods keep occurring because adequate remedial work is not done.**

The DOC letter to Ms Nicola Grigg – of 8 March 2023 details the importance of the mudfish and fails to adequately address family needs for dry and warm homes.

As the Community Response team for Civil Defence emergencies our priority will remain with the affected homeowners/tenants. We believe that clearing the flood way in Happy Jacks can be achieved while leaving upper reaches for healthy mudfish which would repopulate areas damaged during flood way management.

¹ (Available here <https://silverwood.org.nz/library/record/view/id/30>)

We also believe that the water race closure, mentioned by Craig Alexander (Supervisor of BioDiversity, Canterbury, DOC) in his letter is irrelevant to the current situation that needs action if homes are to stay dry. We agree that one farm has changed land use and greater silt volume now enters Happy Jacks Creek. We remain focused on the need for a clean adequate flood way in Happy Jacks so that its flow enters the Selwyn River, NOT Hororata Village.

DOC appear to be arguing that as Dunsandel area has reduced mudfish habitat, the cost should be borne by Hororata residents by way of increasing their risk of flooding. This is an unacceptable linkage.

We believe that solutions exist to manage mudfish habitat AND increase it, while also managing the flood risks. Years ago, contractors regularly managed the silt and shingle build up and removed problem willows, including stumps, without understanding simple ways to increase habitat for mudfish. With current knowledge rivers can be managed both to increase habitat options for mudfish, wading birds and other valued bio-diversity, whilst cleaning/clearing to reduce flood risks.

In our local area, Haldon Pastures continue to work effectively with DOC to increase a large and safe habitat for mudfish. That is applauded.

All of this is not theoretical discussion. To us, this is a real, pressing concern, increased by the North Island's experience of Cyclone Gabrielle. The fact that the bed of the Hororata river at top of Duncans road is well above the roundabout in the village is a matter of deep concern. Add to that the severe willow caused flow restrictions means in a decent flood, the Hororata River can be expected to flow down the Bealey Road...

Our photo on the front page of this document shows the level of current risk/restriction to flow.

1.3. Mayoral letter

Our discussion below follows the mayoral letter's numbering and we have put the items in order of our sense of priority.

Please note our Aug 2022 document outlined, carefully and clearly our community priorities and plans. Those were developed with input from D. Meehan, Water Engineer SDC. It is disappointing to see those discussions being disregarded.

No 7. We wholeheartedly endorse the plan to walk the streams that cause problems between Downs Road and the Hororata Roundabout. We've asked that -

1. John Grigg and Simon Driscoll join the walk given their wide experience in the river system;



Image 1 March 2023, Willows establishing/blocking Cordys stream, approximately 70 m below Hororata roundabout.

2. and that the walk be extended from Downs Road to at least 200 m below the Hororata Roundabout (below Hororata roundabout is relevant given community belief that a bigger pipe/longer pipe is required to help pull water out of centre of village. My elevation measurements show small fall, lots of shingle in the way - plus blocking willows 70 m below the township bridge;
3. and that problem trees and their stumps are identified for removal throughout this walk;
4. and that shingle that is problematic be identified for removal from the flood channel;
5. and of course that the walk **actually leads to actions in the next few months**. This river system is a primary concern given the possibility of a breakout with very severe consequences to homes and lives.

No 3. Inspect condition of the side drain into Cordy's stream, near racecourse) clean if required.

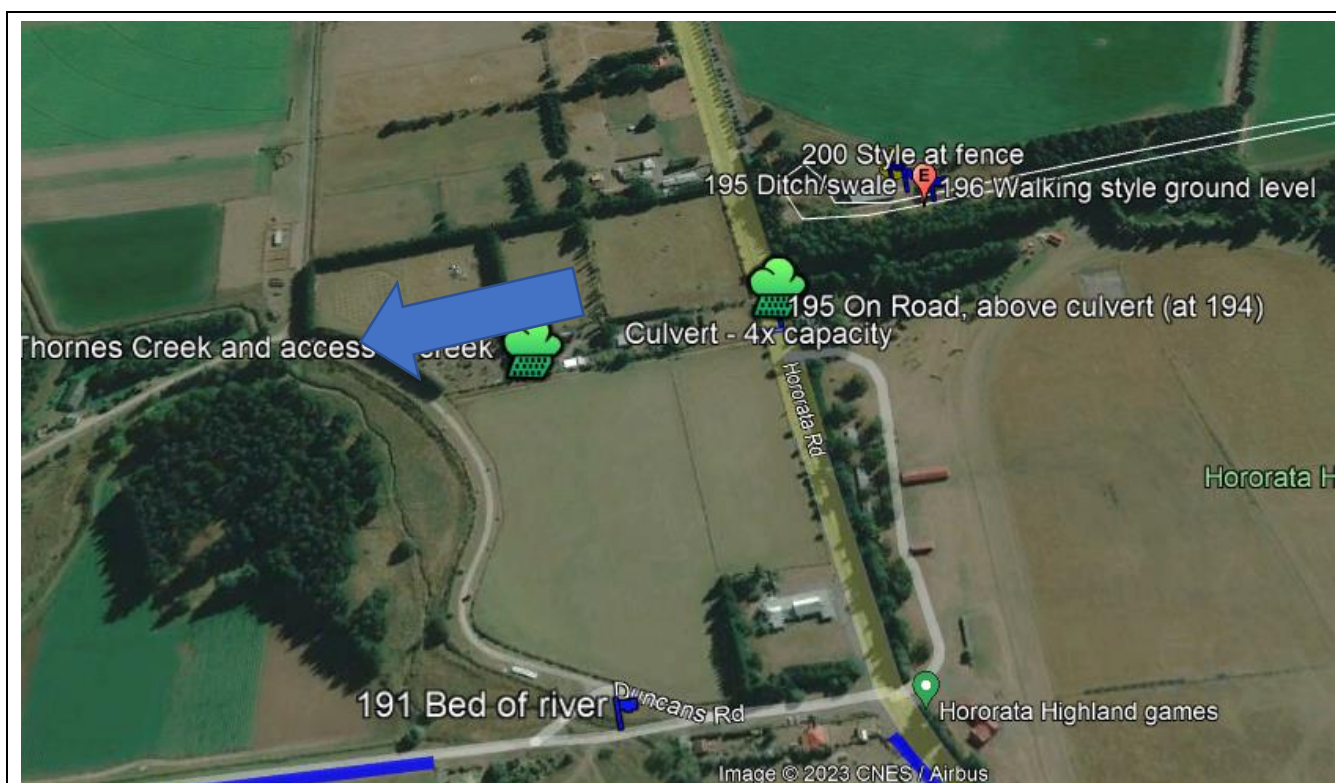


Image 2 Centre of map, above, we requested in Aug 2022 a culvert upgrade to allow 4 x present capacity, and open drain to Cordy's stream will need to be upgraded.

We believe inspection and cleaning will be entirely inadequate.

We presented our priorities in this location in the Aug 2022 document.

No 6. Fix flood gates/flapping fences

These are poorly designed and we agree – need to be redesigned. The sketch below shows a system that has worked for years in our district.

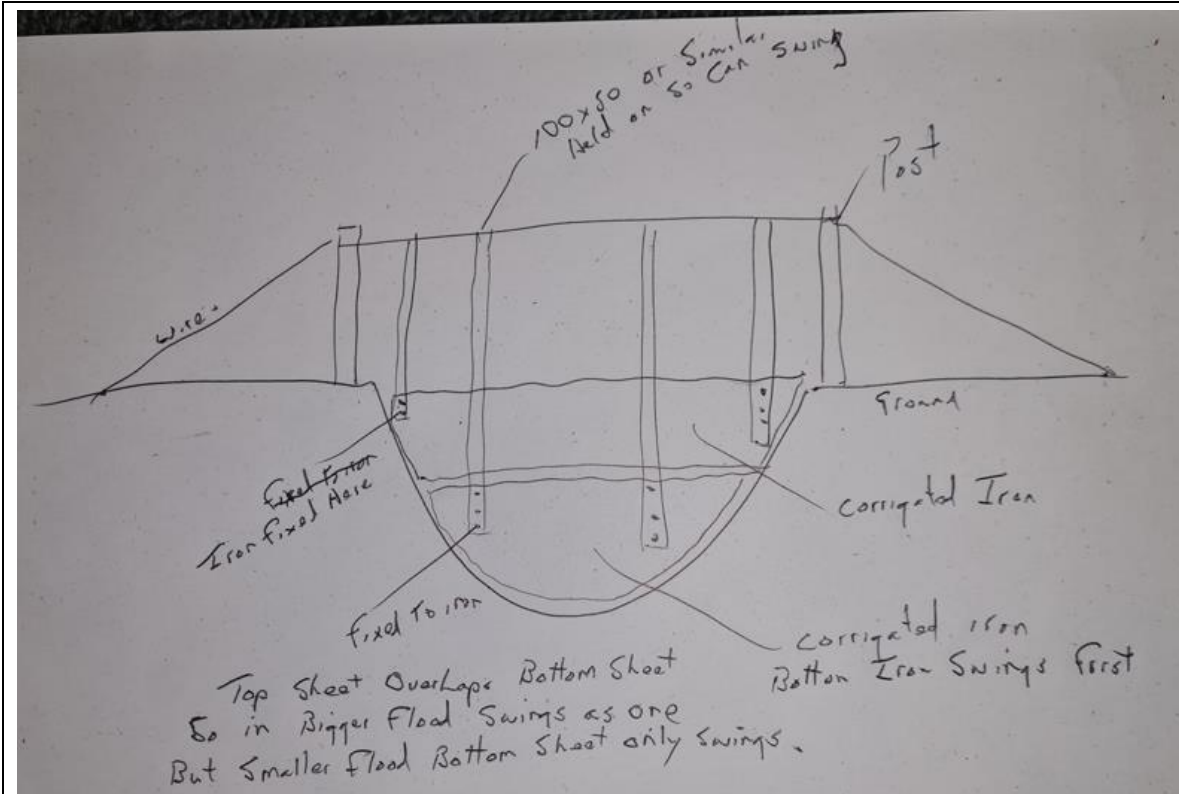


Image 3 Preferred design for effective flood gates, that do not fail with rubbish.

No 5 – Water blast and inspect pipes at 373 Hawkins Road.

We assume this is standard maintenance and will have been done.

No 1 and 2 – Pump and water level recorder at roundabout.

Our concern with this expenditure is two fold→

1. The SDC engineer in 2022 told us that the pump was never going to be an adequate solution.
2. Furthermore this expenditure feels very much like an ambulance placed at the bottom of the cliff.

Please can we discuss and act on the preferred option which is to →

First – stop unnecessary water arriving – that set of actions is detailed in our Aug 2022

And then a new or extended pipe from roundabout to about 100 m below the roundabout. Gravity is a cheap option and is effective even when the power fails.

Regarding a water level recorder – we think money can be better spent and a couple of residents can inform SDC of danger levels.