



# Frequently asked questions

## *Ngā putuputu pātai*

### What is Project Future Proof?

Project Future Proof is a multi-stage project led by Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council to upgrade Whakatāne's floodwall defences and future-proof the town against major flood events. The construction of a new floodwall will be completed by Regional Council. They are responsible for setting the floodwall's location, height and the re-instatement of the footpath. Whakatāne District Council will restore and enhance the riverfront area, with the aim of reducing the visual impact of the floodwall.

### Why is this work happening?

The floodwall is essential for protecting people, property and livelihoods from significant flooding. However, we know it changes the look and feel of the riverfront. This project aims to balance safety with amenity by creating public spaces that are welcoming, accessible and culturally significant.

### What area does Project Future Proof cover?

The work on the floodwall defences is being completed in stages by Regional Council.

- **Stage One** (Whakatāne Skate Park to the former Whakatāne isite building) is complete.
- **Stage Two** (Whakatāne isite building to the end of Quay Street) is also complete, with the footbridge planned for the Wairere Stream due for installation late 2026.
- **Stage Three** (from 12 The Strand to Mataatua Reserve) is due to start in early 2026 and will continue the upgrade of flood defences and integration of riverfront improvements.
- **Stage Four** around the boat ramp (from the end of Mataatua Reserve to near the end of the Wairaka Playground) and alongside the Wairere Stream.

Whakatāne District Council will work on minimising the visual impact of the floodwall through enhancement works. The Council will seek feedback from the public on concept designs for the area round the former iSite building and surrounds, the corner of Quay Street and The Strand and area along the river down to Mataatua Reserve.

## What are the main objectives of the floodwall enhancement works?

- Minimise the visual and accessibility impacts of the floodwall.
- Deliver quality public spaces that are inclusive, safe and welcoming.
- Upgrade the riverfront promenade to connect with the town centre.
- Retain and improve essential infrastructure.
- Honour cultural significance and weave local narratives into the design.
- Reinforce community connection to the awa.

## What will the designs include?

The concept designs will show how we can:

- Soften the floodwall's visual impact.
- Create green spaces and amenities for everyone.
- Celebrate Whakatāne's cultural identity and key viewshafts.
- Support recreation and tourism opportunities.

## Who is funding this work?

This work is funded through \$3.75 million from central government (Provincial Growth Fund via Kānoa/MBIE) and the Council's existing \$7.6 million from the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan budget for enhancement work around the riverfront.

To date, the Council has spent \$1.6 million of this 2024-2034 Long Term Plan budget on enhancement around Kakahoroa Dr and Quay St.

Funding conditions require Council to match the central government contribution dollar-for-dollar.

## What role do iwi and hapū play in this project?

Iwi engagement is a central component of the enhancement works. Engagement will support partnership and co-design, protect areas of cultural significance and ensure the riverfront reflects the unique cultural and historical identity of Whakatāne.

## What about the buildings along Stage 3 – Gibbos, The Iceman and the Whakatāne Sportfishing Club?

Whakatāne District Council has been working closely with the Whakatāne Sportfishing Club, Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Gibbos and The Iceman throughout planning for Stage 3.

Because of the location of the new floodwall, the existing buildings cannot remain where they are – they will either need to be demolished or relocated.

The current plan, agreed with the businesses, is that Gibbos, The Iceman and the Whakatāne Sportfishing Club will continue operating until 30 April 2026.

This timing was chosen to minimise disruption to their operations.

### After this date:

The buildings housing Gibbos and The Iceman will be demolished.

The Whakatāne Sportfishing Club will move to a new location on the western side of Council land.