

Executive Summary

The Severe Weather Emergency Recovery Legislation Act 2023 (SWERLA) commenced on 12 April 2023 for the principal purpose of assisting communities and local authorities affected by severe weather events to respond to, and recover from, the impacts of the severe weather events. Section 7 of the SWERLA provides for the Governor-General to grant exemptions from, modify or extend any legislation listed in Schedule 2, including the RMA, by way of Order in Council (OIC). Subsequently, the AC-OIC was enacted on 25 October 2024. This application is to be considered under the AC-OIC as detailed further in the application.

The January 2023 floods, followed closely by Cyclone Gabrielle, marked a period of unprecedented weather challenges for Auckland. The events underscored the city's vulnerability to extreme weather, prompting Auckland Council to endorse the "Making Space for Water Programme" developed by Healthy Waters. This initiative aims to mitigate flood risks through a series of blue-green networks, addressing critical flood-prone areas with sustainable stormwater solutions.

The Te Ararata catchment was one of the worst affected areas of Auckland following the January 2023 floods. Auckland Council identified significant flooding, causing risk to life, and widespread flood damage to approximately 321 homes, which occurred due to poor flood conveyance along Te Ararata Creek with blockage points at the existing Walmsley Road bridge culverts and Mahunga Drive culverts. At the existing Walmsley bridge location, large debris from properties such as fences and outdoor furniture were caught within or around the existing twin 2.5m wide and 3.7m tall culverts beneath the bridge.

To mitigate flood risk and improve resilience to flooding, this application seeks to reduce the identified flood blockage risk at the Walmsley Road bridge location and provide for increased flow capacity along Te Ararata Creek by:

- Removing the existing twin culverts beneath Walmsley Road bridge which are prone to trapping large debris and subsequent blockage;
- Constructing a replacement bridge that achieves an increased cross-sectional area beneath the bridge structure of approximately 60m² (an increase from the 17m² available with the twin culverts);
- Regrading the existing Te Ararata Creek banks to achieve a wider creek profile and increased cross-sectional area; and
- Relocating the existing Watercare watermain pipe bridge foundations to achieve a wider clearance over Te Ararata Creek and enable the proposed wider creek profile.