

Local Climate Adaptation Pilot

Paekawakawa (Island Bay) and Haewai (Houghton Bay) catchments

Engagement Report



February 2026

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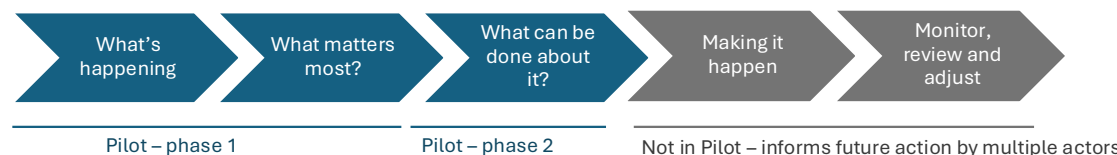


1. Introduction

This report summarises feedback gathered through engagement for the Local Climate Adaptation Pilot. The purpose of the engagement was to understand what the community values about living in the Paekawakawa (Island Bay) and Haewai (Houghton Bay) catchment area, and to hear their views on climate change.

Through the pilot, we are gathering information to develop a shared understanding of current and future climate risks to guide local adaptation planning. The pilot covers three of the five main stages of climate adaptation planning: what's happening, what matters most, what can be done about it. This information will be available for communities, mana whenua, Council, infrastructure providers and others to coordinate effective climate adaptation action.

Main stages of climate adaptation



Community perspectives sit alongside two other key documents:

- **He Taki Rourou mo Paekawakawa** from Taranaki Whānui and Ngāti Toa Rangatira, which outlines mana whenua connections, principles, and environmental considerations.
- **Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment**, which identifies current and potential future hazard risks and vulnerabilities.



Engagement approach

Community engagement took place from October to December 2025, and included:

- **A five-week public campaign using online engagement tools:** a values and vulnerability survey, an interactive “pin your treasures” map, and a children’s colouring-in competition.
- **In-person activities:** a community workshop and five stalls at community events. Activities included maps to identify hazard areas, a “vote for what you value” poster board, comment cards on “Ō tatou taonga | Our treasures,” and emergency preparedness resources in collaboration with Wellington Region Emergency Management Office.
- **Community panel hui:** the eight-member community panel participated in a map activity workshop.
- **A community hikoi:** a guided walk through the Paekawakawa catchment: to share knowledge of the historic waterways, community experiences of hazards and climate risks and vulnerabilities.

Where relevant, this report also highlights key feedback from engagement in 2024 on [Tātou ki Uta | Coastal Reserves Management Plan](#).

Engagement reach

Feedback included:

- 170 online survey responses
- 38 contributions to the “map your treasures” map.
- 250 conversations with community members at in-person events, with:
 - 82 comment cards
 - 72 votes for values

Key questions

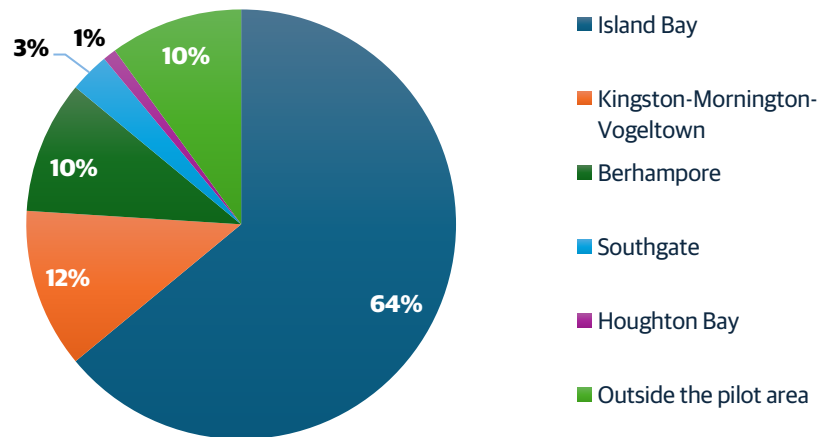
People were asked:

- What they wanted to see or not see over the next 50-100 years.
- What they were worried about with climate change.
- Where they were experiencing climate hazards.
- Places people valued.
- What solutions they saw, and who should be responsible.

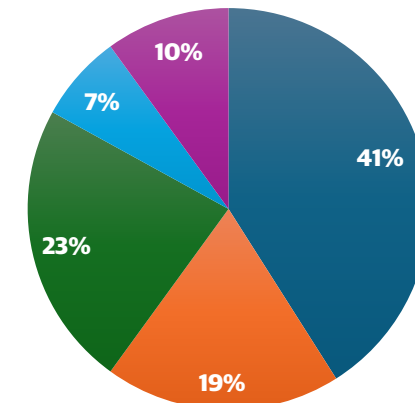
Document structure

- This document is divided into community priorities, hazards and local climate adaptation solutions. It summarises community feedback by key themes, to help inform an understanding of ‘*what’s happening*’ and ‘*what matters most*’ to our community living in this area. It also starts to consider ‘*what can be done about it*’.

Percentage of respondents
(online engagement)



Percentage of population in the pilot area



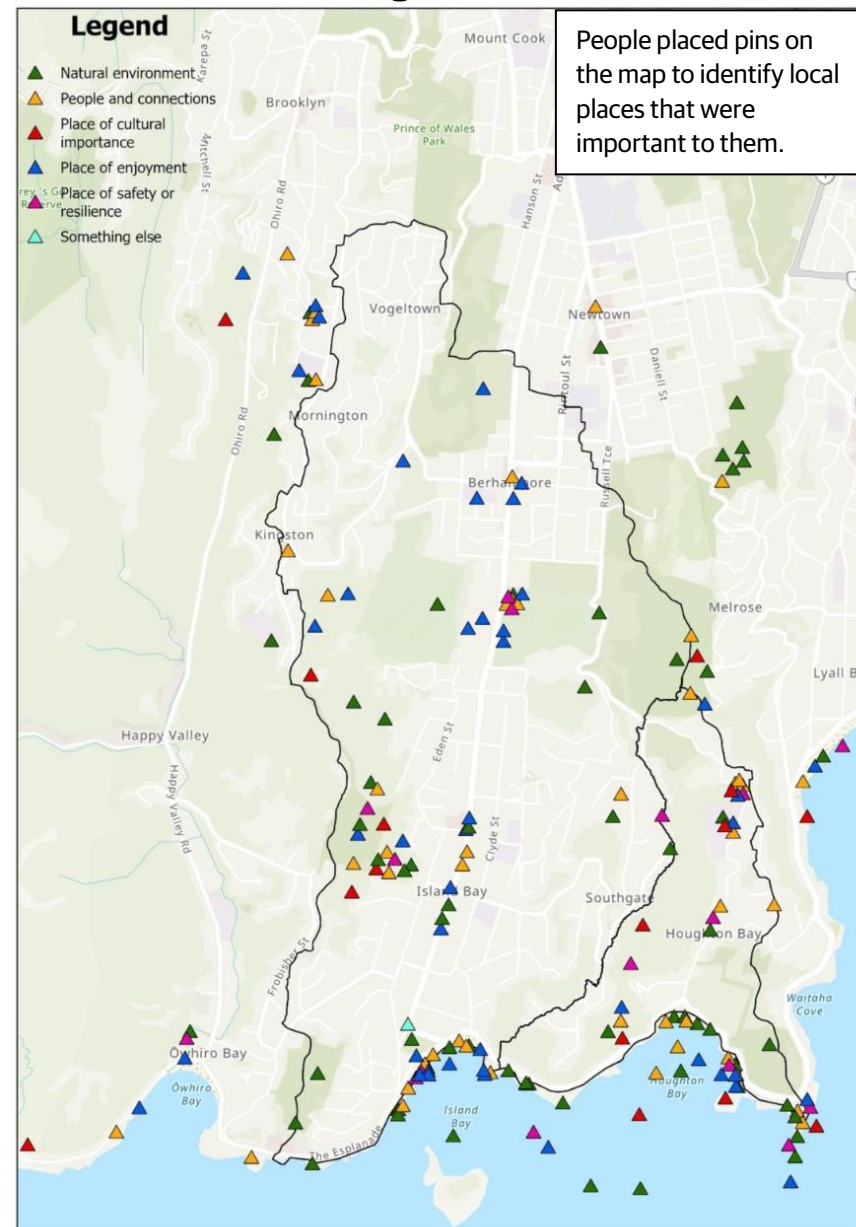
2. Community priorities

Our people and neighbourhoods

Strengths & opportunities

- **Sense of community:** people valued the strong community spirit and local networks that made the neighbourhood feel vibrant and welcoming.
- **Community facilities:** facilities such as Vogelmorn hub, Houghton Bay/Haewai Community Hall, public pools, and the library were valued for fostering local connections. Some people wanted more public facilities, while others prioritised good maintenance. Submitters on Tātou ki Uta raised support for the Marine Education Centre/Bait House.
- **Environmental stewardship:** people appreciated living in a community that cared about the natural environment and emphasised initiatives that built environmental awareness, such as school programmes.

Taonga/Treasures



- **Green spaces:** these were seen as essential to wellbeing, biodiversity, and the character of the area. People wanted these spaces protected and enhanced, with ideas such as green corridors and more planting in residential areas. They also stressed that green spaces should not be lost to development.
- **Public spaces for recreation:** people commented that existing parks, public toilets, barbeques, sports grounds, and the golf course were well used and appreciated. Some residents wanted to see more play areas for children and additional community gardens.
- **Diversity, accessibility and inclusion:** a multicultural and diverse community was valued. Respondents commented that public spaces and facilities needed to be accessible and welcoming to everyone.
- **Access to the beach:** the coast is central to the identity of this area. People wanted to ensure that beach and waterfront access was protected so the community could continue enjoying recreation, social connection, and the natural environment.

Issues

- **Maintenance:** people were concerned about the upkeep of public spaces. Issues include littering, poorly maintained tracks, unclean streets, and inadequate waste management.
- **Pressure on green spaces:** respondents worried that green spaces may be reduced or lost due to new housing or other development, which they felt would negatively affect biodiversity, and the character of the neighbourhood.
- **Future loss of community facilities:** some people expressed concern that facilities could be reduced over time, making essential services less accessible and weakening opportunities for community connection.



"I would like the area to remain a friendly and welcoming place to live with plenty of green space."

"The Southern Walkway brings people into our neighbourhood; it is a historical route from kaimoana to kainga. It gives air, nature, and exercise."

Coastal and natural environment

Strengths & opportunities

- **Natural character of the coastal environment:** respondents valued the wild, rugged character of the coastline, and saw it as central to the area's identity.
- **Biodiversity:** there was strong support for protecting and enhancing local biodiversity. People wanted to see more native vegetation across suburbs, reserves and the coast, and prioritised ongoing efforts to tackle invasive species and improve predator control.
- **Wildlife:** people said they wanted to increase local wildlife – particularly native birds, noting that birdsong enhanced the area. Strengthening local habitats was important.
- **Reserves:** local reserves such as Tawatawa and Paekawakawa were highly valued. People also emphasised the importance of healthy marine reserves.



Issues

- **Environmental degradation:** many respondents were worried about the natural and coastal environment, including habitat loss, deforestation, invasive species and stream degradation. Coastal erosion and dune protection were key issues raised in engagement on Tātou ki Uta. This included the impact of the seawall on dunes in Island Bay, and the stormwater drain causing dune erosion in Houghton Bay.
- **Pollution:** people expressed concern about contamination of waterways, streams and the coast, particularly from sewage, and leachate from a closed landfill in Houghton Bay.

History and culture

Strengths & opportunities

- **Māori history:** Māori history and connections to Paekawakawa and Haewai were clearly treasured by mana whenua and the community. This area was particularly significant for mahinga kai (food gathering). During engagement on Tātou ki Uta, submitters wanted increased awareness of the cultural significance of Taputeranga Island.
- **Kaitiakitanga:** people spoke about the important role of mana whenua in caring for the land and protecting the natural environment.
- **Coastal heritage:** events such as the Blessing of the Boats in Island Bay were important celebrations of local heritage.

"I would love for further sand dune restoration around the coast and for the Taputeranga Marine Reserve to be retained..... Give back mana whenua kaitiakitanga for the whenua and the land will thrive."

Economy



Strengths & opportunities

- **Local shops and services:** people wanted to see a thriving local economy, with more local restaurants, shops and amenities. Many preferred locally-owned businesses over major chains.
- **Social housing:** opportunities were identified to renovate older social housing blocks or build additional units to support residents in need.

Issues

- **Cost of living:** many people were worried about rising living costs. Housing prices, rental affordability and increasing rates were frequently cited as placing

households under growing financial pressure.

'A stronger hub in the centre a bit more like Newtown has with a few more amenities, shops, restaurants etc'

Infrastructure

Strengths & opportunities

- **Energy efficiency and renewables:** people noted opportunities to improve the energy efficiencies of local homes and increase the use of renewable energy.

Issues

- **Water infrastructure:** people were concerned about the condition and resilience of water infrastructure. There was a call for upgraded pipes and improved stormwater drains.

'[I would like to see] Basic civil services improve. Water, sewerage, rubbish, clean streets.'

Mobility and transport

Strengths & opportunities

- **Public transport:** some people highlighted the importance of public transport in their daily lives. Opportunities for improvement included more frequent bus services, better connections to nearby suburbs, improved access to the city centre and additional stops along existing routes.
- **Cycle lanes:** were a major topic of discussion, with a variety of views on whether cycle lanes should be expanded, modified or removed. There was also an interest in improving walkability within suburban areas.

Issues

- **Traffic management:** several people raised concerns about congestion in the area and wanted to see reduced traffic in the future. The coast road was identified as a particular concern with more cars and trucks using it as an alternative route to the city.

- **Parking:** some people wanted improved parking options, and described ongoing difficulties finding parking, particularly at the local shops and waterfront.

"Reduce the exponential increase in motor traffic using the south coast as a thoroughfare between Island Bay and Kilbirnie area."

"I want traffic to be directed along the main access roads and people encouraged and incentivised to make greater use of public transport and non-car options"

Housing and development

Issues

- **Housing intensification:** some people expressed concern about housing intensification in the area, and described high-rise buildings, large developments, apartment blocks, and infill housing as undesirable.

- **Development:** some also felt new homes should meet higher standards and worried that recent developments were affecting the character of the neighbourhood.

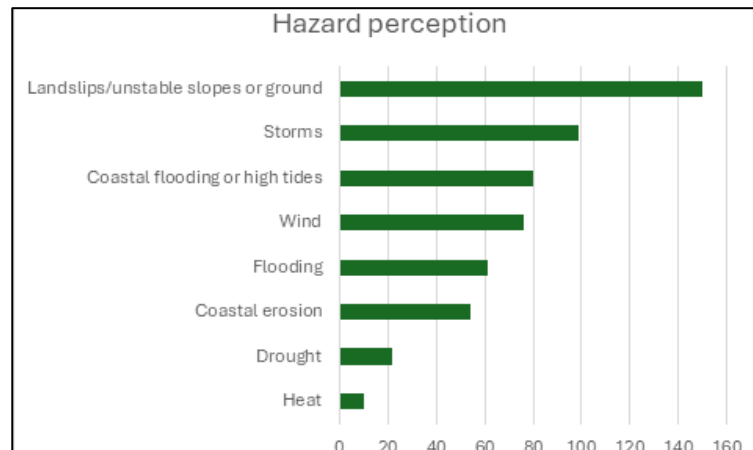
"My home is my biggest concern. Being able to protect it, live in it, maintain it, and what losing it could mean for my future."



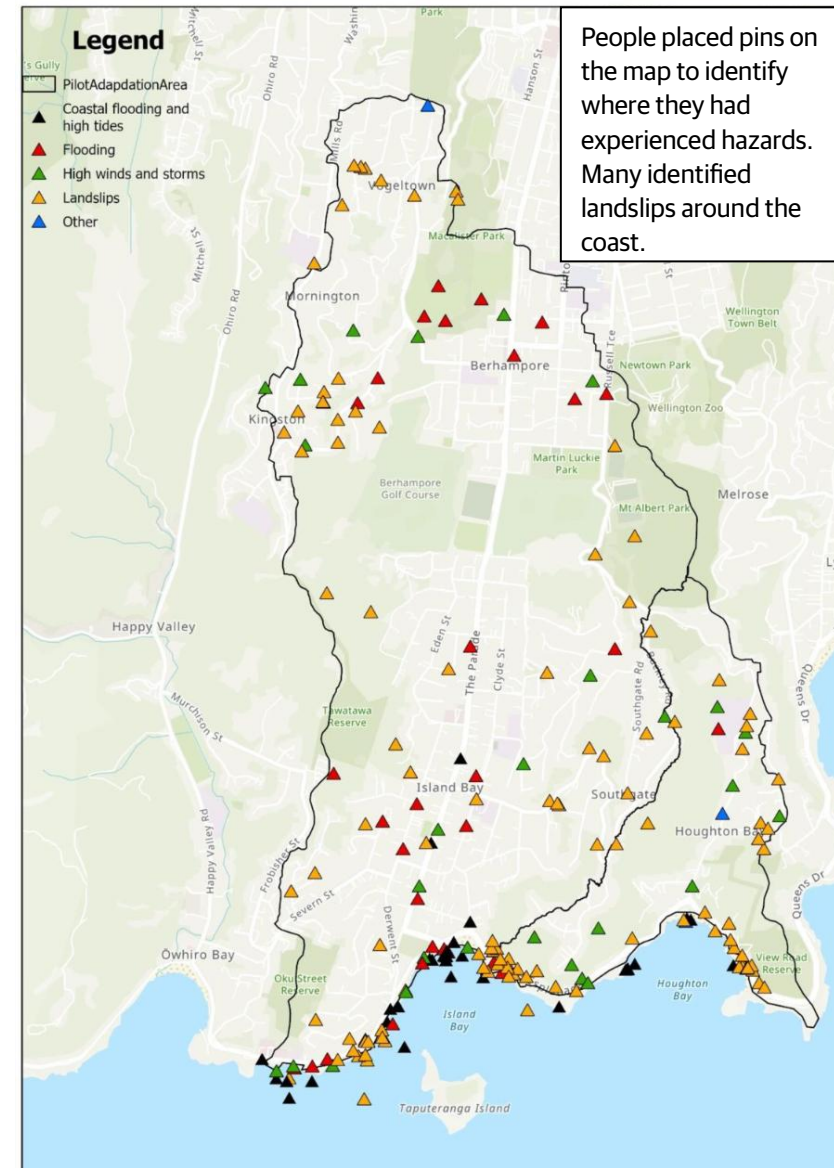
3. Community climate-related concerns

Hazard perception

People identified landslides as the highest risk hazard locally associated with climate change, followed by storms, coastal flooding and wind. Flooding on land was not perceived as one of the top four hazards.

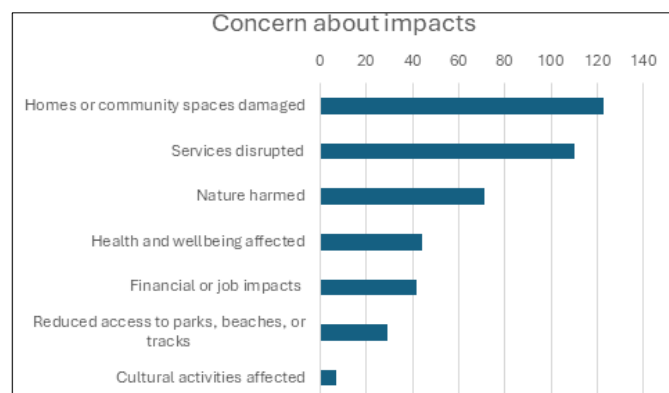


Hazards



Potential impacts

Respondents were most concerned about damage to houses or community spaces, followed by disruption to services, impact on the natural environment and the effect on health and wellbeing.



- **Coastal and natural environment:** many people were concerned about the effects of climate change, including coastal erosion, stronger storms, landslides, sea-level rise and more frequent or severe tidal events.
- **Effect on communities:** another key concern was how climate change could affect homes and community in the long term. Increasing climate-related hazards were seen as a risk to the safety, resilience, and liveability of residential

areas, creating uncertainty for whānau and households.

- **Impacts on mental health:** several people shared that climate concerns were already impacting their mental wellbeing. They described feeling anxious about future impacts, the financial pressures that may arise, and the possibility of needing to relocate.
- **Impacts on physical health:** there was also concern about how more frequent extreme weather events could affect physical safety and wellbeing. This included worries about life-threatening events as well as the general impacts of extreme heat.
- **Mobility and transport:** people were worried that climate change could make it harder to move around the area, especially if coastal roads were increasingly affected by storms, erosion, or sea-level rise. There was a concern that some parts of the transport network could become less reliable over time, affecting everyday travel.

- **Power and utilities:** prolonged disruptions to power services resulting from severe weather events was a significant concern.
- **Water infrastructure:** people commented on the potential of service disruptions and uncertain access to clean water after major weather events. There was a call for upgraded pipes and improved stormwater drains to reduce flooding.
- **Damage to homes:** people shared strong concerns about natural hazards damaging homes. Many had experienced, or seen neighbours experience, landslides, flooding, strong winds, or storm damage.

"Our house is designed in a flood zone (like almost all houses in our immediate area). This really concerns me."



- **Restoration and insurance costs:** there was concern about the high financial risks associated with damage from landslides or flooding. Some respondents noted that rising insurance costs were becoming unaffordable.
- **Financial impacts:** respondents highlighted limited support for homeowners and businesses facing climate-related impacts, noting that some people were likely to experience greater hardship than others.
- **Hazard prone areas:** concern was raised about new development in hazard-prone areas or in locations that may become vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- **Emergency preparedness:** there was concern about how prepared the community is for emergencies. People noted that low-income households, renters and students may face additional challenges in responding to severe events.

"I would not want to see development that ignores the reality of climate change/future changes to storm surges and ocean rise."

- **Food availability and affordability:** some respondents said they were worried about accessing affordable food in the future. They mentioned rising living costs and reduced food production in home gardens due to climate impacts.



4. Climate adaptation solutions

Built environment solutions

- **Resilient critical infrastructure:** community members emphasised that strong, reliable infrastructure is essential for resilience. Utilities like power, water, and communications need to be designed to withstand severe weather events so they remain available when residents need them most.
- **Better stormwater management:** improving how stormwater is collected and managed was a key priority. People suggested upgrading drains and pipes, increasing permeable surfaces (such as rain gardens or permeable paving) and installing pumps to help the area cope with heavy rainfall and reduce flooding.
- **Improved urban planning and development:** many respondents highlighted that better planning could reduce climate impacts. Suggestions included more energy-efficient homes, reducing the urban heat effect through greener streets and shade, and low-carbon building practices. Limiting development in high-risk areas - such as flood zones - was seen as essential for community safety.
- **Coastal Infrastructure:** many people shared ideas for adapting our coastline. Some supported building a seawall, while others favoured natural options like dune restoration or planting to reduce erosion. If a seawall is built, some would like it to double as a walking or cycling path. A few respondents preferred removing the existing seawall altogether. Engagement on Tātou ki Uta also included suggestions to remove the seawall to enable the dunes to naturally meet the park.
- **Stabilise hillsides:** landslips were a significant concern for many people. Stabilising steep slopes - especially near homes - was identified as a priority. Ideas included planting trees in high-risk areas and using engineered solutions such as mesh or retaining structures.

- **Exploring managed retreat:** some respondents recognised managed retreat as a potential adaptation option, which should be considered as part of long-term planning.



Natural solutions

- **Plant more trees:** many respondents want to see more planting – especially native species – across the area. Suggestions included riparian planting, adding trees in urban areas to reduce heat, planting fruit trees to support local food resilience, and using trees as a natural way to absorb carbon.
- **Restore and protect natural ecosystems:** people also stressed the importance of healthy ecosystems. Suggested climate adaptation actions included restoring dunes and wetlands and uncovering or restoring streams to improve local ecosystems.
- **Remove old trees:** some respondents supported removing old or dying trees to reduce the risk they pose during severe weather events.

"Replacing invasive plants with native shrubs, plants that buffer against erosion and wind damage. Planting more native trees for wind shelter."

"Retention of the wetlands so the excess rain has somewhere to go."



Build community resilience

- **Empower community-led climate action:** Several people said they wanted to encourage local, community-driven responses to climate change. Actions like caring for local reserves, volunteering at community centres, and protecting our natural environment help build resilience.
- **Promote community connection:** Some respondents highlighted the importance of activities and events that bring people together and help build supportive networks within the area.

- **Strengthen emergency preparedness:** building community capability for emergencies was also viewed as essential to reduce risk. Ideas included offering training opportunities, improving local shelters such as community halls, and providing more education for residents on how to prepare for disasters.

"Given the inability of centrally co-ordinated emergency services to assist everyone in a regional climate change-related crisis, it is important to enhance the capability of the community to be self-aiding and self-sufficient as much as possible in such a crisis."

Leverage knowledge

- **Mātauranga Māori:** people stressed the value of incorporating mātauranga Māori into decision-making. They noted that Māori knowledge offers important insights into the local environment and can guide effective, place-based climate adaptation.
- **Scientific knowledge:** there were also comments on the need to draw on scientific expertise – such as surveyors, engineers, and other specialists - to better understand climate risks and the challenges the community may face in the future.

“We need to think about this through a te ao Māori view, and figure mātauranga with western science. Thinking about it from multiple angles of economic, built, social, natural, and other wide thinking factors.”

Governance / council action

- **Provide education and information:** the community said they wanted more practical information about climate risks and what they can do to prepare. People were looking for clear guidance on steps they can take now and what challenges the community may face in the future.
- **Offer financial incentives or support:** some community members would like to see financial assistance for climate-related improvements – such as support for retaining walls or grants for cleaner, low-emission wood burners.
- **Engage with the community:** several respondents emphasised the need for local solutions and strong engagement with the community when council makes decisions about climate adaptation.

- **Some feel no action is needed:** a small number of people did not see climate change as a concern and felt that council did not need to take further adaptation measures. (However, results from the [Climate action monitor 2024](#) found that only one in ten were confident that enough action was being taken to help residents prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change).



5. Next steps

This information will be used to help identify the key climate adaptation priorities for the area and informs the next stage of the Local Climate Adaptation Pilot, which focuses on *'what can be done about it'*.

This includes assessing the climate adaptation options, (including those raised by the community), alongside the community identified priorities.

Community perspectives will be assessed alongside two other key documents:

- **He Taki Rourou mo Paekawakawa** from Taranaki Whānui and Ngāti Toa, which outlines mana whenua connections, principles, and environmental considerations.

- **Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment**, which identifies current and potential future hazard risks and vulnerabilities.

During the next phase of the pilot, a short-list of potential adaptation options will be developed.

This information will be available for communities, mana whenua, Council, infrastructure providers and others to coordinate effective climate adaptation action.



Main stages of climate adaptation

