

Questions from Adapting to sea-level rise – Purau and Koukourarata – 21 November 2023

Did you say community retreat is ministry retreat?

The Ministry for the Environment is the government department that is responsible for planning for what managed retreat might look like. Managed retreat being the process of moving away from an area that is particularly vulnerable to natural hazard impacts, such as frequent and intense flooding.

I was previously referring to the Select Committee Inquiry into Community-led Retreat which closed on 1 November 2023. It essentially proposed a process for community-led retreat but ultimately it proposed that the decisions are not made by communities. One of the things that Council submitted on when we responded to the inquiry was that it probably shouldn't be called community-led retreat, if it isn't the community who are leading the planning and making decisions about retreat. To find out more information about the government's inquiry - <https://environment.govt.nz/news/inquiry-into-community-led-retreat/>

What if someone doesn't want to retreat

This was one of the questions that the inquiry asked for feedback on. They put forward two options, one being a completely voluntary system and the second choice being a mix of voluntary and compulsory (essentially you would have to retreat but there would be more discretion about when).

I can fully understand why people do not want to retreat - we often place a lot of time, love and care into the places we live and that matters a lot and it's very hard to give up.

However there are some arguments for having a mandatory retreat process, so I'll just go through a couple of those as they may be new considerations. A concern with a voluntary retreat process is that you can have some homes left behind in the area and there are implications of that - services can start to cost a lot of money for councils to maintain to those homes, for example, after the red zoning from the Christchurch earthquakes, the annual cost of providing waste water services to some of those properties was around about \$25,000 a year, whereas it costs around about \$220 per household for the rest of the city.

It can also mean, for example, the land that has been retreated from can be used for other purposes. It could be restored for a wetland to allow species to retreat to, or it could be a place where we might build protection works, there are a range of things that could be done but if there are still houses there, it can make it tricky.

The last thing to raise is there can be a risk to life - if you're in a very high risk area and there is a significant storm or flood event, there is a risk to life, not only the person who's decided to remain there, but potentially to emergency services who are then required to go into harm's way to help that person out of the area.

I understand both sides of the fence, but ultimately when Council put forward our submission on the inquiry, we did suggest that we were not so keen on a voluntary only system because of some of the implications of that for the wider community (rate base)

Could a relocatable compostable toilet be installed in Purau, at a much lower cost?

This is one of the options in the draft adaptation pathway put forward by the Coastal Panel, which you can see [here](#)

We know the reserve is pretty wet and will be increasingly so. We also know that it's practical to have a public toilet here as there isn't one nearby and there is a reserve so it makes sense to have it there but if it's going to be flooded



more frequently and we don't want to build a permanent structure then it might be logical to build a relocatable compostable toilet.

Have you sufficient data to base most of your impact maps on 1 in 100 year event?

We have coastal hazard maps for 1 in 100 year storm events, but also for 10 in 10 and 1 in 1 (annual) year events. These events are defined based on historic data relating to large tides, storm surge and other factors that influence storm intensity. We tend to show coastal hazard maps with 1 in 100 year storms because this is often the kind of storm that we are looking to plan for and mitigate against. In contrast, a 1 in 1 year (annual) event is so common that the maps don't represent the severity of possible impacts.

