



## Media Advisory

### Bluecliffs State of Emergency

Number: 06

Date: 23 February 2024

Time: 1.30pm

# Waiau River bar opened as part of Local State of Emergency

This is an official message from the Civil Defence Controller Simon Mapp

Update – Bluecliffs state of emergency - #6

On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Environment Southland’s contractors completed the cut into the gravel bar at the Waiau River mouth.

This work, directed as part of the local State of Emergency declaration for Bluecliffs, aims to realign the river opening to the sea in the hopes it will delay further erosion in front of the properties at the Western Southland coastal community.

Emergency Management Group Controller Simon Mapp said, “Late on Thursday the contractors cut through the bar after moving around 30,000 cubic metres of material over the past two weeks.

“With the opening now complete, we want to thank all those who have been involved in making this happen.

“We are currently awaiting the weekend’s increased river flow and incoming weather to determine the effectiveness of the bar opening. This work has always been a struggle against Mother Nature, and the team has done a commendable job despite difficult circumstances.”

Meridian Energy has been managing the flow release at the Manapouri Lake Control structure, which has greatly assisted with the safety of our contractors undertaking the opening. Over the next two days there will be a gradual increase in the release of water from the control gates. Rain forecast in the catchment this weekend will also contribute to the flow in the Waiau River, and we encourage anyone planning to be near or on the river to take care.

“The area around the new opening in the bar east of Bluecliffs is extremely dangerous, so please do not go onto or near this area. Some access points around the area are still restricted for safety reasons. Please continue to avoid any unnecessary travel to the area while this state of emergency is in place,” Mr Mapp said.

“The opening was a highly complex and technical task, and all precautions for the safety of those undertaking it were planned for. Given the complex and dynamic environment at Bluecliffs it’s unknown how successful this opening will be or for how long it may last.”

The bar opening will hopefully reduce the erosion in front of the properties and the tip for a period of time, which will enable further conversations with the community about the future of the area.

Planning for the removal of material at the tip site is continuing to progress well, and work is likely to start on-site in the next few weeks.

ENDS

This release has been issued by the Duty Public Information Manager on the authority of the Southland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Controller.

Contact Duty Public Information Manager, ph 027 384 0104

Website: [www.civildefencesouthland.govt.nz](http://www.civildefencesouthland.govt.nz)