



## Media Advisory

### Bluecliffs State of Emergency

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## Bluecliffs – transition to recovery

This is an official message from the EMS controller Matt Alley

Southland District Council Mayor Rob Scott has moved the response to the erosion at Bluecliffs to the next step, signing a Transition to Recovery declaration.

“The decision to take this step into the recovery phase provides a minimum of a 28-day period where Emergency Management Southland and the councils will continue to support the community.

“Support for the residents will continue in largely the same ways as it has over the State of Emergency.

“This move allows us to appoint a Recovery Manager who will take a medium to longer-term view to managing the erosion risk at Bluecliffs.

“We have progressed the two key pieces of work we set out to as part of this State of Emergency, and we have a lot more information available to us. This puts us in a good position to develop solutions, alongside the community, that are focused on the longer term.”

A state of emergency was declared on 8 February when significant erosion put homes and an old community dump at risk of going into the sea.

Two pieces of work were directed under the state of emergency. One was to attempt a bar opening to realign the Waiau River mouth, taking pressure off the land in front of the houses along Bluecliffs Beach Road. The second was to remove the material at the old community dump site.

The attempt to open the bar took around two weeks, and struck several challenges including the weather, hard material and a larger volume of gravel than initially anticipated. The opening was short-lived, with the sea swells pushing gravel back into the cut quickly after it was made.

On Friday 8 March, residents were asked to evacuate so the work at the dump site could begin. Reports of explosives and investigations confirming asbestos-laden material meant the work site required an exclusion zone of 1 kilometre around the dump.

Work to remove material has progressed well, with around 1100 tonnes removed over four days. No explosives have been found to date, however the team have removed a large amount of asbestos which was separated and managed by specialists.

Minister for the Environment Penny Simmonds announced a successful joint funding bid by Environment Southland and Southland District Council for the removal of material at the dump site at Bluecliffs, granting them \$1.35 million towards planning and the remediation works.

Mayor Scott confirmed that work will continue to progress on both projects.

“We’re reviewing the assessment of work already done to open the bar at the Waiau River mouth and the options available to us as next steps. Once we’ve considered this, we’ll be speaking with the community in the next week or so.”

“The community’s ideas for the opening will be considered alongside this independent advice, and we’ll discuss the next steps with the community before moving forward,” Mayor Rob Scott said.

“I want to thank the Bluecliffs community for their ongoing cooperation and patience throughout this period, and I encourage them to continue reaching out either to Emergency Management Southland or to other support services.”

Residents thinking about their preparedness to the ongoing issues such as moving houses should continue.

“I know some residents had started planning to move homes to the front of their properties or away from the area entirely. This is a positive move, and they should continue to finalise these plans while the work to clear the dump material is underway.”

In a Transition to Recovery phase, the Recovery Manager, like a Controller in a state of emergency, can direct and coordinate the use of personnel, material and other resources for recovery activities.

ENDS

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

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