Te Mahere Whakaoranga mō Te Tai Tokerau

Northland Regional Recovery Plan 2026



January Severe Weather Event

March Severe Weather Event

Cyclone Vaianu

CD CIVIL DEFENCE NORTHLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP

Karakia

E rū ana te whenua

Hikohiko te uira

Papā te whatitiri

Ko te mūmū, ko te āwhā

Ka tau te hau o Tāwhiri

Haumi ē hui ē

Tāiki ē!

Karakia written for Northland CDEM Group by Arama Morunga, (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai), 2019



Photo source: FNDC

[Cover image: Flooding and slips at Ōakura. Photo by Heli Me via Local Democracy Reporting; source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/regions_local-democracy-reporting/584997/whangarei-mayor-wants-district-s-state-of-emergency-lifted-on-tuesday-if-practical]

Kōrero Tīmatanga | Introduction



Tēna koutou. Tēna koutou. Tēna tātou katoa.

The severe weather events of 2026 – the storms of January, March, and Cyclone Vainu in April – have had significant impacts on our communities of Te Tai Tokerau Northland.

While each event was isolated and localised, impacts on the directly-affected communities were considerable – hundreds of people evacuated during the night; homes damaged or destroyed; losses of household goods, cars, and other possessions; economic impacts to farmers and businesses; and more.

After the period we call 'Response' in emergency management – when Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management coordinates councils, emergency services, government agencies, and community organisations to respond to immediate needs – comes a longer, more complicated, and usually more costly period: Recovery.

In most disaster Recoveries, it can take weeks or months to understand the full impacts and consequences of the event. For Northland in 2026, piecing together this jigsaw was made more complicated by having three events occur in succession. We had to understand how these impacts related to each other, and what this meant for our communities.

This Regional Recovery Plan, therefore, is as much about telling some of the story of what happened in the 2026 events as it is about capturing the Recovery work that has happened and will continue into 2027.

The Recovery from 2026's severe weather events will likely be the second-largest Recovery that Northland CDEM has coordinated in its 27-year history, after Cyclone Gabrielle. We know that future weather events will occur, and we will continue to work alongside iwi, households, communities, and government to reduce risks and increase community readiness.

For those who were affected by this year's events, I offer you my best wishes for your Recovery. Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui.

Colin 'Toss' Kitchen MNZM
Chair, Northland Emergency Management Committee
Kahurangi, Te Rākau Whakamarumaru o Te Tai Tokerau

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Purpose of this plan
Ngā whāinga o te mahere nei

This Regional Recovery Plan captures the key regional-level Recovery work in Te Tai Tokerau Northland resulting from the 2026 severe weather events of January, March, and Cyclone Vaianu in April.

This document identifies impacts of the 2026 weather events, work that has happened to date, planned Recovery activities, funding, and other agencies involved in this Recovery.

Emergency Management in Aotearoa New Zealand is based on 'the four Rs' of Reduction, Readiness, Response, and Recovery. (Throughout this plan, we capitalize 'Response' and 'Recovery' to show their formal status.)

Following Response comes the Recovery period. For events of this scale and impact, this period usually takes longer, involves more people, and requires more resources, including funding. In Te Tai Tokerau, this is coordinated by Northland CDEM[1], led by the Group Recovery Manager, with work completed by regional and district councils and many partner agencies.

A key part of the Recovery so far has been piecing together a better picture of the impacts and consequences of these events. Often after disasters, the full extent of the impacts is not known for weeks, months, or even years. For Northland in 2026, we had to assess each of the three events, as well as the consequences of them happening so soon after each other. For example, some households, farmers, and businesses undertaking their own Recovery work had their plans changed by the subsequent events.

In that context, this Recovery Plan includes details about these consequences, so there is a consolidated picture, a historical record, and a better context for planning, coordinating, and delivering the Recovery work.

Importantly, this document is:

- a **consolidated plan** for these three events (and explores some of their cumulative and compounding impacts and implications)
- a **regional-level plan** – the three district councils have produced their own Local Recovery Plans and/or incorporated Recovery work into 'enhanced business-as-usual' activities as they deemed necessary. As such, this document sets out the different broad areas of responsibility between the district councils / Local Recovery Offices and the Northland CDEM Group / Group Recovery Office, but does not detail the district councils' actions.

[1] Following the passage of the Emergency Management Act in September 2026, Northland CDEM will change its name. As this name change is not finalised at the date of this plan, and the plan was written before the Act was passed, we have left 'Northland CDEM' in this plan.

Event summaries
Whakarāpopototanga ohotata



Flooding in Kiripaka, Northland. (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/590783/in-pictures-aftermath-of-the-storm-in-the-upper-north-island 27 March 2026)

The Northland CDEM Coordinating Executive Group meeting of 28 April summarised the 2026 severe weather events as follows:

January 2026 Severe Weather Event

On Saturday 17 January 2026, MetService issued a Heavy Rain Watch for Northland. Rainfall intensity subsequently exceeded forecasts, with the most significant impacts occurring along the eastern coastal corridor between Whangaroa and Ngunguru. The event resulted in evacuations, road closures, and damage to residential properties.

A State of Local Emergency was declared for the district at 4.00 pm on Tuesday 20 January. The declaration was later extended with the geographic scope reduced to the Hikurangi–Coastal Ward. The district transitioned from response to recovery on 3 February 2026.

March 2026 Severe Weather Event

On Monday 23 March 2026, MetService advised that a tropical low was developing in the Tasman Sea, with potential impacts to Northland expected mid-week. Preparatory monitoring and readiness activities were undertaken, noting that parts of the region were still in recovery from the January event.

On Wednesday 25 March, MetService escalated warnings in eastern Northland to a Red Warning for heavy rain. Emergency Operations Centres and the Regional Emergency Coordination Centre were activated in response.

Significant rainfall occurred across impacted areas, compounding damage sustained in January. Impacts included further evacuations, flooding of dwellings, road closures, and power outages. A State of Local Emergency was declared in both the Far North and Whangārei districts during the afternoon of 26 March. Impacts within the Kaipara District were more limited.

April 2026 – Tropical Cyclone Vaianu

In early April 2026, Tropical Cyclone Vaianu approached Aotearoa, with forecasts indicating the potential for heavy rainfall, severe winds, and coastal inundation across Northland. Given saturated catchments, existing infrastructure damage, and ongoing recovery activity from earlier events, the predicted conditions presented a significant multi-hazard risk to the region.

A State of Local Emergency was declared for Northland at 5.00 pm on Friday 10 April 2026, and the Regional Emergency Coordination Centre transitioned from monitoring to full activation. Regional preparedness messaging was issued in advance of forecast impacts, and Local Emergency Operations Centres activated across the region over 11–12 April to support response activities.

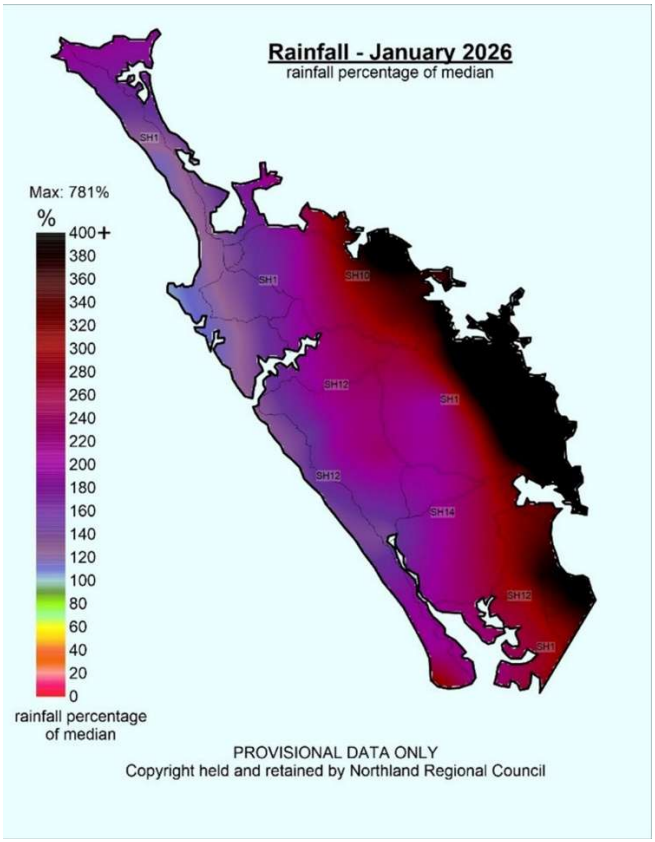
Impacts across Northland were more limited than forecast. As a result, the State of Local Emergency was terminated at 5.00 pm on Monday 13 April 2026, with the Far North and Whangārei districts transitioning back to recovery immediately thereafter.

Events by rainfall and wind data

Rain and wind for these events was severe at some Northland locations:

- For January, Punaruku at Otetao Reti Marae had 285.5 mm of rain with peak intensities of 80 mm/hour. For context, 285 mm is more rain on one weekend than usually received for the whole summer, and 80 mm is what Northland usually receives for the whole month of January. Punaruku also recorded the highest rainfall total for the month, with 608 mm, which is nearly eight times what is normally expected. Overall, Northland averaged 232 mm of rainfall in January, which is three times what is normally expected for the month (see image below).

- For March, Waimamaku at Wekaweka Rd had 303 mm of rain with peak intensities of 32 mm/h.
- For the Vaianu/April event: Waiarohia at Whangarei central had 136 mm with intensities of 22 mm/h.



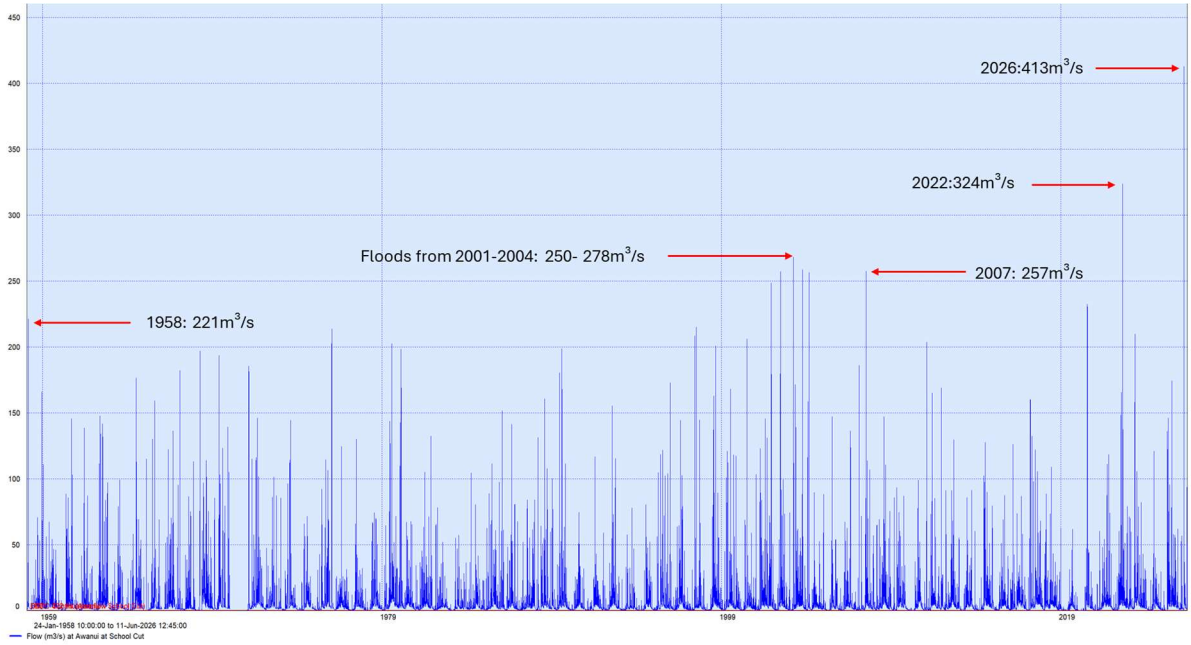
Northland Regional Council also reported that 'January's heavy rainfall lifted regional soil moisture levels for most of Northland well above the long-term average, and briefly above field capacity in eastern areas such as Kaikohe, Kerikeri, Whangārei, and Warkworth'.

These soil moisture levels contributed to the thousands of landslides recorded across the three events as well as issues faced by some farmers in accessing paddocks and re-seeding.

MetService reported that the highest winds for these events were all at Cape Reinga:

- January: 104 km/h
- March: 133 km/h
- Vaianu/April: 109 km/h.

The March event resulted in flooding in Kaitāia, with flow rates in the Awanui River recorded as nearly double those experienced in previous floods, at 413 cubic metres per second:



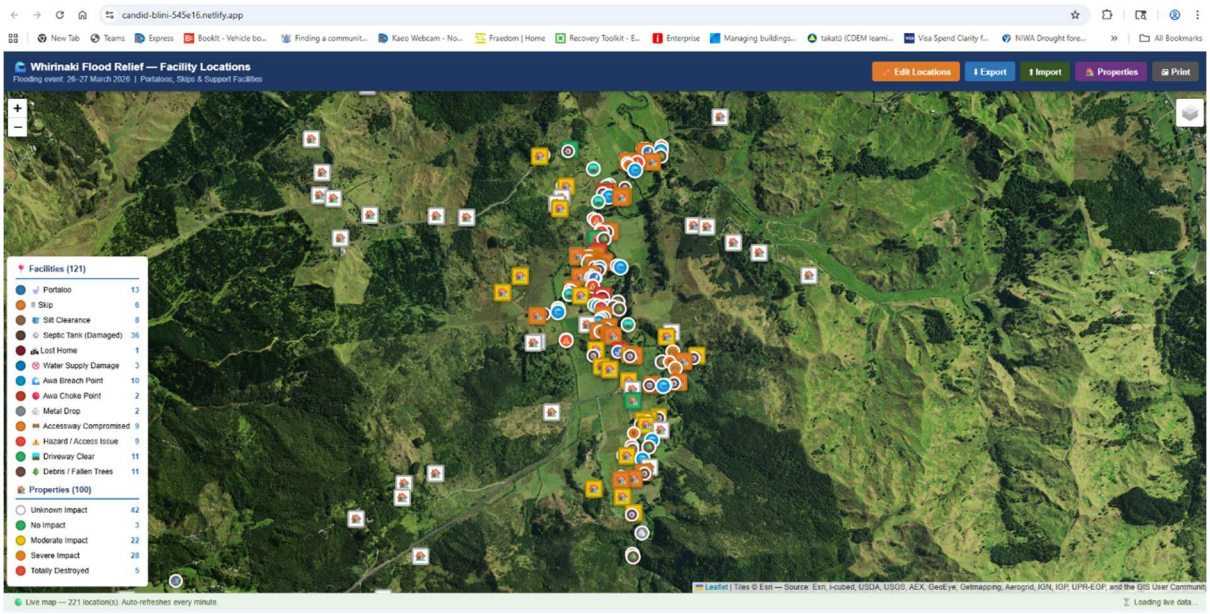
From hazards to impacts and consequences

In most emergencies, the full impacts are not known during the Response phase, and emerge over the following weeks, months, and sometimes years. The following sections expand on some of the above impacts, and bring forth new data, information, and analysis. Note that this is not a full impact summary, but does contain data from some key stakeholders, partners, and communities.

Impacts to whenua Māori

Impacts to whenua Māori and whare have been significant, especially in some east and west coast settlements and the and Far North. These include destroyed homes, blocked roads, and damage to access ways and septic tanks. Significantly, the Mitimiti Private Potable Water Scheme (servicing 45 dwellings and a marae, school, and public toilets) was damaged and required repair.

These impacts caused significant mamae for some whānau, and it's important that any formal designations of these events as 'minor' don't diminish the real effects on these communities.



Impacts at Whirinaki, mid-April 2026. Northland CDEM thank the Whirinaki Trust for providing such crucial information, which has helped Far North District Council and partner agencies delivery local Recovery initiatives to affected whānau. We also recognise and honour the work that Whirinaki Trust has done to take care of local whānau.

Just as 'communities are the first responders', communities are the first 'recoverers' – people in impacted communities always respond to emergency events – people look out for neighbours, remove trees, seek outside assistance, advocate for future resilience, and much more.

While impacts to whenua Māori are being dealt with by the Local Recovery Offices at Far North District Council (FNDC) and Whangarei District Council (WDC), and by local whānau, hapu, iwi, rūnanga, and Māori health and social service providers, the Group Recovery Office is supporting longer-term solutions to these issues through

- advocating for funding for increased marae resilience and local, Te Ao Māori-based emergency management capability, in partnership with the Regional Public Service Commissioner, Te Kahu Hononga | the Regional Leadership Group, and Te Kahu o Taonui
- supporting a housing application by the Ngāti Wai Trust Board to central government about long-term housing solutions that are out of harm's way for future events
- advocating for and/or supporting specific regional projects focussed on solar panels, slip remediation, access way resilience, and more.



State Highway 12 through Whirinaki was turned into a river on March 26. (Source: NZ Herald: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/floods-in-northland-town-prompt-calls-for-move-to-higher-ground-in-hokianga/BYPLA2OARRFZHG56ZSP3NJEBOY/ 1 May 2026)

Evacuations, houses, and housing



Residual flooding in residential Kaitāia. (Source: https://www.1news.co.nz/2026/03/26/live-homes-without-power-as-heavy-rain-lashes-upper-north-island/ 27 March 2026)

In the January event, more than 200 people were evacuated or self-evacuated in the Whangarei District Council area. In March, more than 250 people from 118 homes evacuated in the Far North. During Cyclone Vaianu, 10 people from five homes are known to have evacuated.

Formal Civil Defence Centres and informal Community-Led Centres (CLCs), often based at marae, provide shelter to evacuated people. In the January event, 20 CLCs opened, with 63 in March, and 11 during Cyclone Vaianu, and with others on standby. This represents the importance of years of community-based emergency planning by Northland CDEM and local hapū and iwi and the incredible manaakitanga of communities across Te Tai Tokerau.

In the January event, seven homes were red-stickered (entry prohibited / unsafe to inhabit) and 22 yellow-stickered (restricted access / significant damage and/or risk) in the Whangarei District Council area. Knowing the complete picture of damaged houses is difficult, as many houses in Te Tai Tokerau are not consented. Ngāti Wai Trust has made a formal submission to central government about possible longer-term housing solutions on the east coast.

In the March event, 65 homes were reported as affected in Whirinaki, with nine uninhabitable; one home burnt to the ground in a fire possibly caused by floodwater affecting the wiring.



A bach in a lake at Ōakura. (Photo by RNZ/Peter de Graaf, source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/emergencies_local/584373/inside-northland-floods-through-the-eyes-of-oakura-residents 18 January 2026)

People housed by MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service (TAS)

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise (MBIE) delivers the Temporary Accommodation Service (TAS), which provides housing for displaced people after emergencies.

The total number of people registered for TAS in Northland from the 2026 weather events was 72, with 45 of these successfully being housed in TAS-provided accommodation.

Insurance claims

In mid-2026, the Insurance Council of New Zealand (ICNZ) reported that more than 30 000 insurance claims had been lodged for the five weather events recorded nationally. While each event has seemed localised and limited, the aggregate tells a different story: this total is about a quarter of the claims in early 2023 for the Auckland Anniversary and Cyclone Gabrielle events, which is significant. ICNZ will provide Northland-specific data later in 2026 – and have also offered support for communities in Recovery, such as with complex cases, presenting at community hui, and advice to governments about risk assessment and reduction.



Flooding throughout Ōakura during the January weather event. Photo: Nena Rogers (Source: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/five-homes-red-stickered-after-coastal-whangarei-weather-bomb/AGTYDRWCLVFZZCXGJC6TP62WMY/ 28 January 2026)

Rural impacts



Flooding near Kerikeri in March 2026. Photo: RNZ/Tim Collins (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/592003/weather-northland-farmers-still-not-done-cleaning-up-flood-damage-as-whirlwind-vaianu-arrives 10 April 2026)

Rural impacts occurred across Northland during the three events. Unlike residential damage, which tended to be more localised, rural impacts were noticed from the top of the Far North to the Kaiapara, and from the west to the east coast.

For the January event alone, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) conducted on-site assessments across the following communities: Okiato, Kororāreka, Ōrongo, Paroa, Manawaroa, Waikare, Jacks Bay, Pokaitaniwha/Parekura, Wairoa, Te Rāwhiti, Te Ākau, Taupiri, Ngaiotonga, Tuparehuia/Bland Bay, Te Parapara, Pūriri, Admirals Bay, Tutaematae, Papakauri, Punaruku, Whangaruru (North and South), Ōhāwini, Ōakura, Umukaha, Mokau, Mohei, Ōtara, Te Mimiha, Ngawai, Taiwawe, Helena Bay, Mimiwhangata, and Whananaki.

The main impacts reported across the three events were

- loss and damage to fencing and debris build-up on fences
- silt deposits covering grazing and pasture
- maize and turnip crops flooded with slowing receding flood waters
- newly sown grass washed away
- severe erosion across both hill country and floodplains
- waterway contamination
- significant debris accumulation in rivers and streams

- damaged and destroyed culverts and river crossings
- damaged water infrastructure
- loss of stock for several Māori farming operations
- compromised farm accessways.

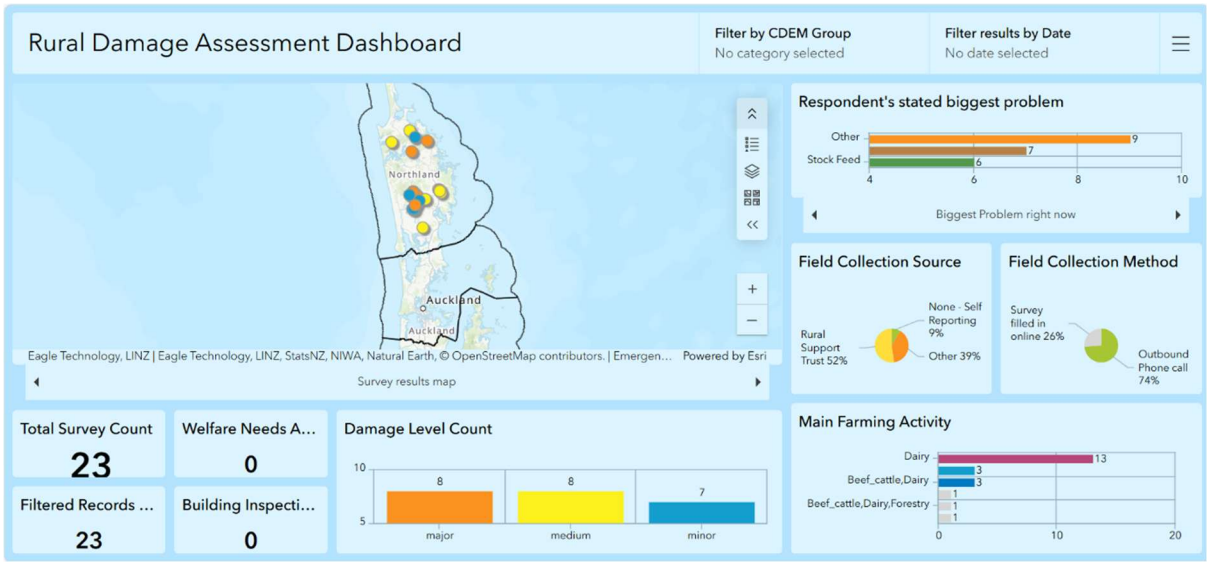


Rural Rapid Damage Assessments

After the March event, to gain a more detailed understanding of rural impacts (and cumulative effects from January), MPI and members of the NAET group (Northland Adverse Events Team, which brings together MPI, CDEM, and rural peak and member bodies, chaired by the Rural Support Trust) conducted Rural Rapid Damage Assessments (RRDAs) with farmers across the region.

Of these 28 assessments, 9 were assessed as major, 11 as having medium impacts, and 8 minor impacts. This project was not a complete assessment of damage to farms, but gave an indicative picture of the issues.

The RRDA tool provides a useful dashboard summary of impacts, including damage levels, respondent's stated biggest problem, farming activities affected, and more:



Rural Rapid Damage Assessments (RRDAs) undertaken at mid-April 2026.

Some specific rural impacts included:

- Between 310 and 410 hectares of pasture damaged and requiring re-sowing, plus other areas still being assessed. By mid-May, some farmers reported that they had given up resowing for 2026, after three attempts being destroyed by subsequent weather events
- 2200 cows being moved off floodplains
- 91 555 litres of milk having to be dumped.

After this data was collated, an additional 10 properties in the Far North area were reported to be impacted with silt, debris, and damage to paddocks, fences, culverts, access ways, and crops. Damage assessments are being undertaken to quantify the total impact.

Examples from specific farms

At the individual farm level, specific issues experienced by some farmers include:

- One Kaitāia farmer lost $15 000 in seed stored in a shed that went underwater.
- A Rangiahua dairy farm had 95% of the property under water, 12 hectares of regrassing destroyed, and major fencing damage.
- A Kaitāia grower experienced moderate impacts with the loss of approximately 12 hectares of kūmara after the crop was submerged for two days. A second kūmara grower in Awanui also faced moderate impacts, losing around 16 hectares of crop.
- Another Kaitāia farm lost a bridge providing access between parts of the farm and had significant debris deposited from the Awanui River, including logs, timber, and household rubbish which had been illegally dumped.
- A Wairoa farmer lost 60 cattle and pigs to the flooding; it's unknown whether they escaped into bush or were taken out to sea.

Cumulative impacts and the 'long tail' of Recovery

By mid-April, MPI's summary of rural outcomes had moved from a list of specific impacts on particular farms, or overall trends and issues, to a more detailed understanding of the cumulative effects of the three weather events, as well as some of the cascading problems:

> Collectively, the biggest problem identified is not a single damage type, but the cumulative impact of repeated events, escalating recovery effort, and uncertainty about whether farm systems will have sufficient time to recover before the next significant weather event ...
>
> Infrastructure safety and animal welfare risks feature prominently. Damaged races, bridges, culverts, slips, tomo [sinkhole] formation, and unstable ground are creating pinch points for stock movement and elevating the risk of injury or stock loss, particularly during calving and routine herd movements ...
>
> Winter feed security is a major concern, particularly for dairy operations. Widespread pasture inundation, silt deposition, and repeated wash-out of newly sown grass have forced multiple re-grassing attempts within the same season. Farmers report reluctance

to re-invest until weather patterns stabilise, increasing anxiety about feed availability heading into winter.

A recurring issue raised by farmers is the inability to keep pace with recovery work. Repeated fencing repair, debris clearance, race remediation, and re-grassing are occurring alongside normal farm operations, with labour shortages and contractor availability significantly constraining progress. Several respondents note that the cumulative workload is becoming unmanageable.

Across the surveyed properties, respondents consistently identify a set of dominant and compounding concerns that extend beyond individual damage categories. These issues reflect operational strain, growing uncertainty around recovery timelines, and concern for animal welfare and business viability should further adverse weather occur.

These impacts can have a 'long tail' for farmers and landholders. In mid-May, the Rural Support Trust reported increased numbers of farmers requesting counselling and Business Advice Fund referrals (which usually only occur when farmers are facing significant financial challenges).

Northland CDEM has applied to central government for additional funding for RST to urgently increase their work to meet demand; we are hopeful that this modest request is successful.



Both the Kaitāia Farmlands and Farm Source stores were impacted by the March 2026 event, which in turn reduced their ability to assist farmers in their immediate recovery efforts. Photo: Brad Snow (Source: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/kaitaia-flooding-500-evacuated-after-far-north-town-drenched-in-rain/EH4OWPULENAF7IQY2ZBM3UVK74/ 27 March 2026)

Other community wellbeing impacts

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education report that 11 Tai Tokerau schools were impacted over the three events, or about 7% of all schools in Northland. Fortunately, most of these received minor damage, with the extensive repairs to 88 schools after Cyclone Gabrielle likely assisting in weathering the 2026 events.

Whangaruru community members reported experiencing isolation, impacts on education, and access issues for health, services, food, and essential goods.

After the March weather event, Hauora Hokianga reported emerging health concerns, including headaches, infections, respiratory symptoms, and diarrhoea, which are typical after such

events. Hauora Hokianga, Te Whatu Ora, and other health and social service organisations provided public health messaging and treatment options to reduce health impacts.

The flooding of the Kaitāia MSD/Kianga Ora offices in April reduced their ability to provide face-to-face services. This situation was compounded as some of the community requiring support would have been affected by the events.

With some communities reporting increased stress, anxiety, and depression after these consecutive events – and with some communities still experiencing effects of 2023's Cyclone Gabrielle – the New Zealand Red Cross is currently working in collaboration with Northland CDEM and Te Whatu Ora to deliver a series of Psychological First Aid workshops at key locations across Tai Tokerau.



Mud, trees, and debris smashed through the rear wall of Ōakura Community Hall, which had only been renovated 18 months before. (Source: https://www.1news.co.nz/2026/01/19/glass-was-breaking-northland-residents-fast-exit-amid-wild-weather/ 19 January 2026)

Built environment and critical infrastructure



Damage to the road surface on Whakapara Bridge, on State Highway 1 north of Whangārei. Photo: RNZ / Nick Monro (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/590783/in-pictures-aftermath-of-the-storm-in-the-upper-north-island 27 March 2026)

Council and national infrastructure

Damage to the built environment and critical infrastructure was minor overall, but with higher rates of localised impacts as well as some impacts across much of the region. In total across the three events, approximately 340 roads in Northland were affected – a significant amount, considering that Cyclone Gabrielle affected 450 roads.

Two major impacts were the Ngaiotonga Bridge washout on Rāwhiti Rd, east of Kawakawa, and a massive slip at Russell Road, which cut off the Whangaruru coastal community. This slip will involve removing more than 90 000 cubic metres of material and months of work by Whangarei District Council and contractors. The current plan is to have the road fully re-opened by December 2026.



Ngaitonga Bridge wash-out during January event. Photo: David White, Stuff (Source: https://www.stuff.co.nz/nz-news/360928097/pictures-widespread-damage-after-days-heavy-rain-across-north-island 22 January 2026)

All three of Northland's district councils' water infrastructure also sustained some damage:

	January	**March**	**Vaianu**
Water	**Sites affected**	**Sites affected**	**Sites affected**
FNDC	2 (Opua & Opononi)	2 (Water treatment: Kaikohe and Paihia)	1 (Rawene)
KDC	5x Pumpstations (Dargaville)	1WWTP (Kaiwaka) 1x Pumpstation (Dargaville)	1WWTP (Kaiwaka) 3x Pumpstation (Dargaville)
WDC	2	6	4



The Ōakura beachfront was badly eroded in the January event. (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/regions_local-democracy-reporting/584497/northland-s-punaruku-gets-more-than-whole-summer-s-rain-during-weekend-weather-bomb 20 January 2026)



Repair work to Russel Road, Whangarei District Council.

Power

Power outages across the events were as follows:

	January		March		Vaianu		Totals ICPs across event (for scale only)
Power	**Total ICPs affected**	**Peak**	**Total**	**Peak**	**Total**	**Peak**	
Northpower	25 421	5824	28 869	5553	2406	1050	56 696
Top Energy	705	399	8965	4798	4760	1422	14 430
Total	**26 126**	**6223**	**37 834**	**10 351**	**7166**	**2472**	**71 126**

At more than 71 000, the total number of electricity Installation Control Points (ICPs, commonly referred to as 'customers') affected across these events is *higher* than that recorded during Cyclone Gabrielle (64 000). While this is not a direct comparison, as some of these sites would have been affected in more than one of the 2026 events, it is still a useful reference of the number of sites (and therefore people) affected. Restoration times for these events were significantly shorter than those during Cyclone Gabrielle. This is partly an outcome of the type and scale of the events, but also reflects the large amount of work done by Northpower, Top Energy, and Transpower during the last three years.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications systems were relatively unaffected, due to a mix of electricity being restored quickly, and improvements in battery backup at cell tower sites over the last three years.

Rail – a Recovery success story

KiwiRail reported no slips across the Auckland–Northland line. This compared to 134 damaged sites during Cyclone Gabrielle. While this is partly due to the isolated nature of the 2026 events, it's also testimony to the work KiwiRail have done to the line since 2023, including cleaning drains, stabilising slip-prone land, installing new drainage and culverts – a great example of how forward-looking Recovery work results in increased resilience.



Flood damage on Whakapara Bridge. Photo: NZTA (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/590783/in-pictures-aftermath-of-the-storm-in-the-upper-north-island 27 March 2026)

Economic impacts



Pak'nSave, McDonalds, car wash, and Bells Produce store in Kaitāia inundated with water from the Awanui River. Photo: Toto Nicholson (source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/590783/in-pictures-aftermath-of-the-storm-in-the-upper-north-island 27 March 2026)

January event

For the January severe weather event, regional intelligence gathered through Northland NZ (formerly Northland Inc), North Chamber, Whāriki, Te Puni Kōkiri, and partners confirmed:

- approximately 65 businesses identified as potentially impacted
- around 20 to 30 businesses significantly affected
- many affected firms reported 50 percent or greater loss of trade during peak season.

Northland NZ reported:

> Direct impacts include property and stock damage, loss of access due to road closures, workforce disruption, and infrastructure damage not fully covered by insurance.
>
> Indirect impacts have also been significant. The State of Emergency in Whangārei created a widespread perception that the region was closed, resulting in cancellations, reduced forward bookings and competitive displacement. Some operators face up to 14 weeks of reduced or no visitation during what is normally peak season.
>
> For many tourism operators, peak summer trading is critical to carry them through the winter downturn. The loss of this revenue window materially increases business risk ...
>
> Insurance coverage for business interruption and indirect losses is limited, leaving many otherwise viable firms exposed. Māori enterprises, rural businesses, and remote communities are disproportionately affected and have fewer recovery pathways under existing settings.

March event

Kaitaia Business Association provided the following summary of economic impacts to Kaitāia from the March flooding event:

- Approximately 10 businesses and organisations are known to have been directly flooded, based on survey responses and local knowledge of affected sites. This is a conservative confirmed count, not a full survey of all impacts. Most known affected sites were concentrated around North Park and Whangatane Drive.
- Feedback from a small number of affected businesses indicates a conservative quantified impact of $2.45 million minimum. This includes reported stock loss, building and contents damage, clean-up and repair costs, evacuation costs, and lost turnover/revenue. This should be treated as a partial snapshot only, as not all affected businesses and organisations provided a response.
- Reported lost turnover/revenue alone is at least $750 000, based only on businesses that provided enough detail to quantify this impact. This does not include loss of profit,

downstream supplier impacts, reduced customer activity, or revenue impacts for affected businesses that did not respond.

- Insurance has not removed the financial burden for all respondents. Feedback indicated that some insurance excesses were too high to make claiming viable, some businesses did not hold business interruption insurance, and others were still waiting for insurance assessors or sign-off before clean-up and rebuilding could progress properly.
- Recovery is being slowed by uncertainty around insurance, repairs, and future flood mitigation. Some respondents reported that they remained unable to begin rebuilding or fully resume normal operations while waiting for insurance decisions, repair plans, or confirmation about future mitigation work.
- There is a reported confidence issue around reinvestment in the North Park area. Some affected businesses are still assessing whether rebuilding is viable without clearer assurance that stop bank, drainage, or flood mitigation works will be prioritised.
- Operational disruption extended beyond physical damage. Respondents reported reduced trading hours, staff access issues, staff leave, remote working arrangements, lost productivity, generator use, dehumidifier hire, skip hire, and substantial clean-up labour.
- One of the directly flooded sites was the local Work and Income (MSD) office. Services have temporarily relocated, but the original site remains closed and many people appear unsure where to attend appointments or drop off paperwork. This has created wider community disruption and indirect business impacts through recruitment, work broker support, employment pathways, and training-related subsidies.
- Top Energy was one of the directly flooded sites. While downstream impacts are not quantified in the survey data, its role as a regional electricity network provider makes the flooding of its local operations significant from a resilience perspective, particularly while it was also responding to post-flood outages and network issues.

To address some of these issues, Northland NZ submitted a funding proposal to central government for economic Recovery, and continues to support businesses across the region with its existing advice, events, and programs.

Northland CDEM also collaborated with Kaitaia Business Association, Northland NZ, and Northland Regional Council (NRC) to hold information sessions in June and August for Kaitāia businesses affected by the March flooding. These sessions allowed businesses to better understand the river flow rates during this event, flood mitigation works that were completed before the event, remediation work since the event, and planned and possible future works (see pages 43–44 for more information). Further meetings between the Kaitāia business community and NRC are planned for the future, to support better mutual understanding and collaboration on risk reduction and resilience.



Extensive flood damage occurred at Folders in Kaitāia during the March 26 storm. Photo: Folders (Source: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/kaitaia-business-hit-by-1m-flood-damage-seeks-answers-on-flood-protections/RZQMGM2D2VBLRDZVK3WH5UYFHY/ 17 April 2026)



'A sign of the times for a NorthPark business after 26 March 2026 flooding in northern Kaitāia'. Photo: LDR / Supplied (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/ldr/591599/auckland-mayor-blasts-regional-council-after-kaitaia-flooding-hits-120m-precinct 6 April 2026)

Impacts on the natural environment



Major slip near Pūriri Bay Campsite. Photo: DOC.

Impacts to the natural environment were minor to moderate, with significant landslides across the region, likely exacerbated by the already-soaked ground conditions. Imagery analysis of these slips is underway, and early estimates are of thousands of landslides across the region (see section on NRC's landslide mapping on pages 45–47).

Walking tracks, including on Te Araroa Trail, suffered damage and were closed in places. Wastewater discharge occurred at various sites including Paihia, and Ōakura, resulting in public health advisories and caution on harvesting kaimoana.

Whangarei District Council reported damage to two of their parks sites. In mid-2026, the Department of Conservation (DOC) reported the following impacts to the land it is kaitiaki for:

January	March	Vaianu	Outstanding
• Significant slip, Mt Manaia track – long-term closure • Part of Urupukapuka Bay campground closed (slip at eastern end) • Whangamumu track closed due to slips and washed-out bridge • Mahinepua peninsula track	Minor slips and treefalls reported, no closures.	• Minor impact with treefalls (Kororipo pa, Rainbow falls) and small slips on various coastal tracks • Sand dune erosion • Other impacts from Cyclone Vaianu and the	• Mt Manaia track – long-term closure • Urupukapuka Bay campground closed • Whangamumu track closed • Mahinepua peninsula track closed • Pūriri Bay camp closed • Concerns about

closed due to slips • Motutara track closed due to slips • Wharf Rd carpark – closed due to slips • Mimiwhangata and Pūriri Bay camps closed due to slips on access roads. Otamure camp sites reduced due to flooding.		cumulative impacts of the 2026 events may yet emerge.	erosion on foreshore dunes at Mangawhai spit could cause breach which could impact Fairy Tern nesting sites. Northern end of Waipū spit at mouth of Waipū river (river mouth has changed course from flooding causing erosion issue.)



A large slip flattened a bridge and reduced part of the track at Mt Manaia to debris. Photo: Kubi Witten-Hannah. Source: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/mt-manaia-among-northlands-green-spaces-damaged-in-wild-weather/U4FRZWNVYNBGHG2KX7TGUUHLBI/ 23 January 2026



Damaged tents at the Pūriri Bay campground. (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/weather/584536/80-campers-trapped-in-whangaruru-return-home-after-having-to-hike-over-massive-slip 20 January 2026)

Concurrent, consecutive, cascading, compounding, and contingent considerations

Recovery work is assisted by making severity assessments, using the national Recovery Severity Assessment Tool. These assessments give a broad answer to the questions of 'How large will the Recovery be? How long will it take to fix? How expensive will it be?' and so on.

Despite most severity assessments by the Group and Local Recovery Offices for the 2026 events in Northland as being 'minor', two key points must be made. First, a 'minor' Recovery still requires some level of coordination. Second, an assessment of 'minor' doesn't diminish the impacts of the events, or the experiences of community members who are affected.

The three severe weather events of 2026 aren't separate – they have what is becoming known in disaster Recovery as the '5Cs': concurrent, consecutive, cascading, compounding, and contingent considerations.

Recovery planning by the Northland CDEM Group and the three district councils / Local Recovery Offices is therefore occurring in this complex context. As just one consequence,

delivering on three ‘minor’ Recoveries in a way that factors in these interdependencies may actually be as complex as coordinating and delivering one ‘moderate’ Recovery. As such, the combined councils’ Recovery work from the 2026 weather events is likely to be the second-largest Recovery undertaken in Te Tai Tokerau Northland, only behind Cyclone Gabrielle of 2023.

Some of the impact summaries above include aspects of these ‘5Cs’; Appendix 1 gives more information and examples of how they are playing out in this Recovery. The actions that follow in this Plan factor in these complex issues.



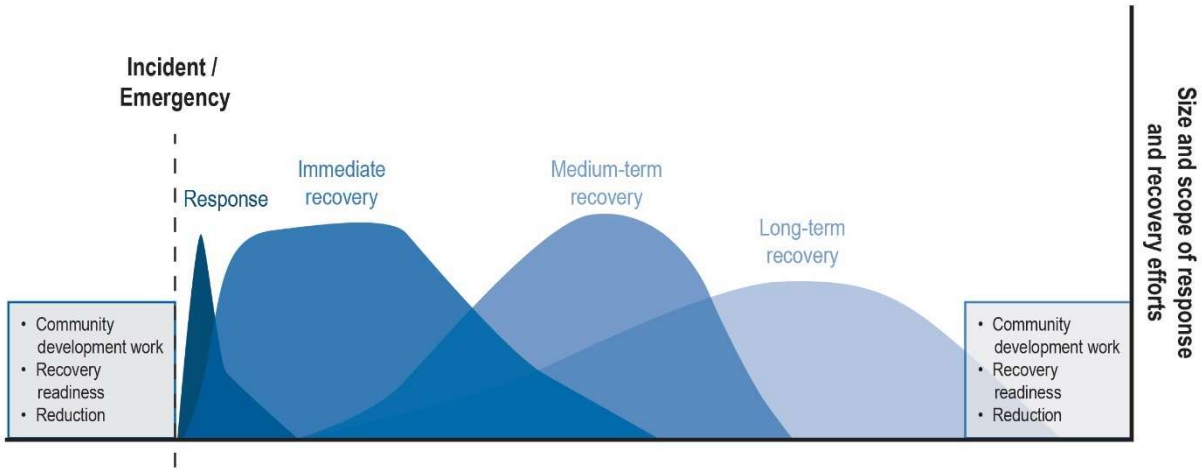
Kāeo Church surrounded by floodwaters. Photo: Christopher Maca (Source: https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/590783/in-pictures-aftermath-of-the-storm-in-the-upper-north-island 27 March 2026)

Recovery phases
Te whakawhitinga ki te mahi whakaoranga

Recovery is usually considered to have four phases:

- Recovery in Response
- immediate Recovery / short-term
- medium-term Recovery
- long-term Recovery.

These phases overlap, and typically have different lengths of time, and intensities of work:



For Northland's Recovery, the phases in this Plan are:

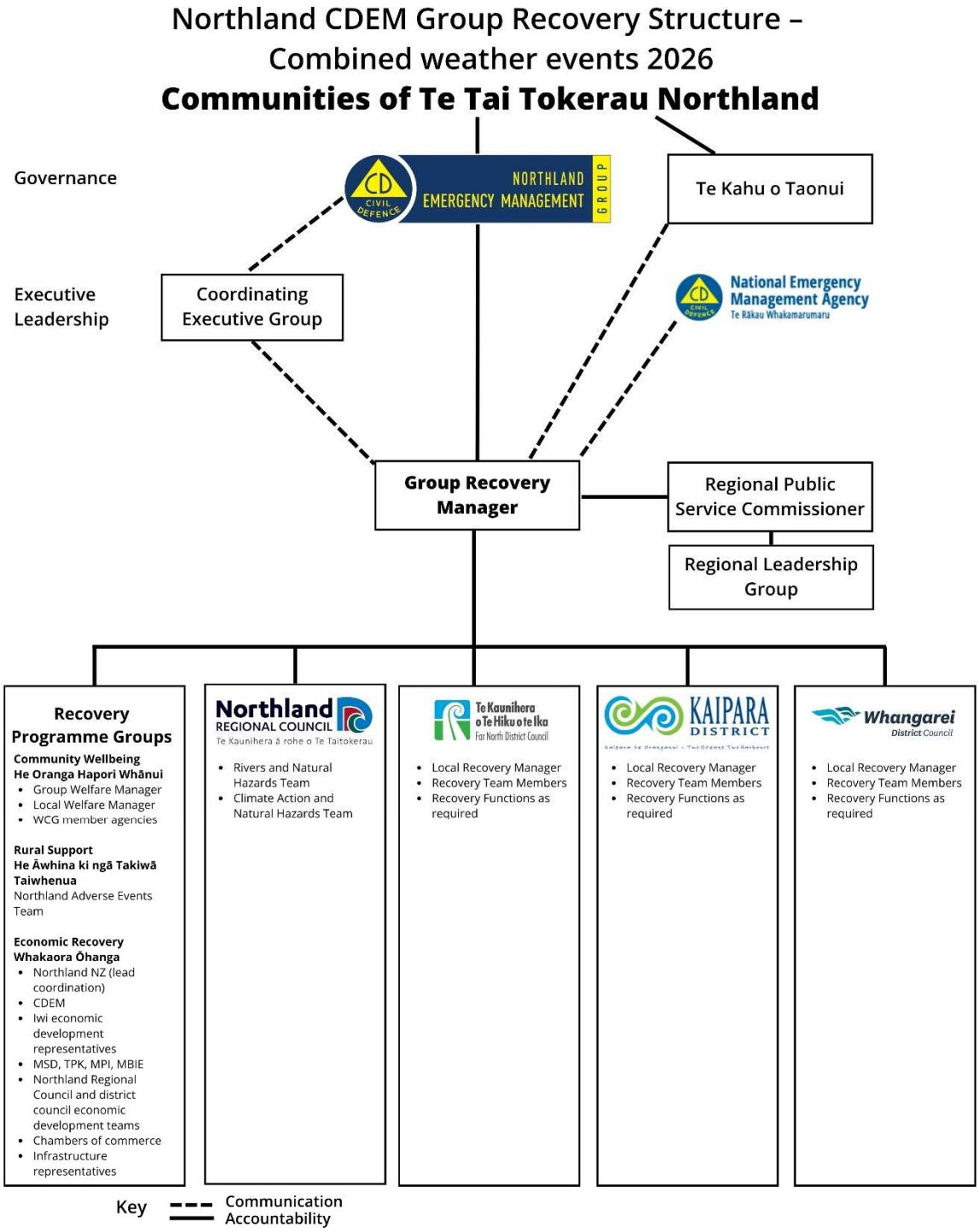
- short-term: to 30 June 2026
- medium-term: 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027
- long-term: 1 July 2027 onwards.

These dates aren't based on external events, but are a planning tool to allow for clear timeframes for actions to be completed and reported on, and funding to be tied to each of the Council's annual planning and budgeting processes.

While these events were assessed as 'minor' overall, and most Recovery work will be completed in the short and medium-term, there could be some long-term impacts such as the major slip on Russell Road, and the longer-term questions of managed retreat for communities, such as Whirinaki and Whangaruru/Ōakura Community Adaptation Planning.

Regional Recovery structure

The Northland CDEM Group structure for this Recovery is below.



Regional and local responsibilities

Recovery activities for the three combined events will be divided among the three district councils / Local Recovery Offices and the Group Recovery Office as follows:

District council / Local Recovery Managers / Local Recovery Offices	Regional / Group Recovery Manager / Group Recovery Office
Recovery Pou / Recovery Environments • Social – community events (such as Rae ki te Rae Recovery Hubs) and any necessary referrals to health and social service providers • Housing – temporary accommodation (working with MBIE TAS), buildings (e.g. placarding), and aligning with district council adaptation work • Built environment – Council assets (roads, waters, parks, etc).	**Recovery Pou / Recovery Environments** • Social – regional coordination for local support • Housing – pre-existing and long-term issues (led by HUD and RLG) • Rural – regional coordination (with NAET) • Economic (led by Northland NZ) • Natural – coordination with DOC • Science and hazard data support (led by NRC) • Built / critical infrastructure – possible small projects and regulatory reform • Regional coordination, national liaison, regional funding submissions.

Recovery funding | Pūtea whakaoranga

As at the date of this plan, central government have informed CDEM Groups and local councils that there is no new, dedicated Recovery funding available for these events. It's also not yet clear what existing funding streams will be available for the costs submitted by CDEM, Councils, and communities. However, some funding has come to the Northland region, as detailed below.

Funding received so far

- Marae Emergency Response Fund: $506 800 (administered by TPK), $348 000 to WDC area, $158 800 to FNDC area; for hapū, iwi, and marae for reimbursement costs from the weather events, Recovery and clean-up costs, and readiness for future events.
- Emergency Relief Funds / Mayoral Relief Funds (ERFs/MRFs): $592 000, with $45 000 contributed by NZ Red Cross to FNDC's MRF for the January event.
- MPI funding for RST (January event): $15 000.

Details of the Emergency Relief Funds / Mayoral Relief Funds are as follows:

January	**Amount $ available**	**App'ns received (#)**	**Payments made (#)**	**Amount claimed ($)**	**Amount paid ($)**
FNDC	$145 000 ($45k donated by NZ Red Cross)	66	58	$237 240	$143 985
WDC	$297 000	207	139	$607 000	$297 000
Total – Jan	**$442 000**	**273**	**197**	**$844 240**	**$440 985**
March	**Amount $ available**	**App'ns received**	**Payments made (#)**	**Amount claimed ($)**	**Amount paid ($)**
FNDC	$150 000	267	83	$2 110 000	$135 016
WDC	0	0	0	0	0
Total – March	**$150 000**	**267**	**83**	**$2 110 000**	**$135 016**
Total – Jan & March	**$592 000**	**540**	**280**	**$2 954 240**	**$576 001**

Note: Emergency Relief Funds were not issued by central government for Cyclone Vaianu.

Civil Defence payments

On 29 January, MSD announced Civil Defence payments would be available to select communities:

- Rāwhiti
- Ngaiotonga
- Bland Bay (Whangaruru North)
- Punaruku
- Ōakura (Whangaruru South)
- Mokau
- Helena Bay
- Mimiwhangata
- Whananaki.

These payments were open until 4 March. MSD made 233 payments, totalling $179 000.

Of these payments:

- 194 requests were approved for food
- 179 were approved for clothing
- 114 were approved for bedding
- 104 were approved for other emergency grants including health travel costs, water tank refills, and fridge/freezers.

On 29 April, MSD confirmed that no Civil Defence payments would be made available for the March and Vaianu weather events.

Council-funded work

The district and regional councils have funded multiple aspects of this Recovery work, including road and water repairs, landslide hazard assessments, Recovery Hubs, welfare support, and more. While some of these costs will be reimbursed by central government, much of the cost – totalling millions of dollars – will be borne by the local councils.

Funding applied for

Northland has applied to central government for a total recovery funding of $85 796 533. This amount included $27.8 million for Council and DOC road repairs, $1.9 million for economic Recovery, and $19.9 million for regional resilience projects.

Funding requests have been submitted by Far North and Whangarei District Councils, as well as collaborative projects suggested by

- all three district councils (FNDC, KDC, WDC)
- NAET (Northland Adverse Events Team, comprising Rural Support Trust, MPI, rural member and peak bodies, and Northland CDEM)
- the Welfare Coordination Group / Social Recovery Group (health and social service agencies, government agencies, Councils, and iwi service providers)
- Northland NZ and the recently formed Economic Recovery Environment Sector Group (below)
- Te Kahu Hononga | The Regional Leadership Group (below).

Northland NZ and partners, working in collaboration with the Economic Leadership Group of Te Kahui Hononga | Regional Leadership Group submitted a funding proposal for $1.9 million following the January event. This proposal included

- $1.2 million for targeted business and farm recovery grants
- $600 000 for coordinated autumn and spring tourism demand campaigns
- $100 000 for programme administration, coordination, and reporting.

Following the March event, Te Kahu Hononga | The Regional Leadership Group submitted a $19.9 million funding proposal for seven multi-year projects, commissioned by the Regional Public Service Commissioner, focussed on regional resilience for future events:

- marae-based emergency communications network
- resilient power
- community emergency hubs and logistics
- community medical preparedness and high needs programme
- whānau-centred preparedness
- data mapping and welfare coordination
- marae infrastructure and resilience upgrades.

The Group Recovery Office will continue to advocate to central government for funding for these projects.

Northland CDEM Group Recovery Office key actions and projects
Mahinga Whakaoranga

The bulk of the Recovery activities for Northland's three weather events in 2026 are being coordinated and delivered by the three district councils (Far North District Council, Kaipara District Council, and Whangarei District Council).

At a regional level, Northland's CDEM's main Recovery priorities are to:

- support the District Councils and Local Recovery Managers in their local Recovery delivery
- coordinate Recovery responsibilities that have been assigned to the Group/regional level (coordinating community wellbeing organisations, supporting long-term housing options, and coordinating and advocating for rural and economic Recovery)
- coordinate regional government agencies
- provide national liaison and advocacy on behalf of the region, including coordinating regional funding submissions and negotiating funding with central government.

Community wellbeing ('social Recovery')

Action	**Lead agency** **Support agencies**	**Relevant Recovery environments**	**Expected date to be completed**
Coordinate Welfare Coordination Group in Recovery / Community Wellbeing Recovery Programme Group.	Northland CDEM Community Wellbeing Recovery Programme Group members	Social Economic Built Rural Cultural	Completed
Assist health and social sectors to work together, make cross-referrals, and collaborate on projects.	Northland CDEM Community Wellbeing Recovery Programme Group members	Social Economic Built Rural Cultural	To continue as needed
Advocate for community readiness and response projects to relevant government agencies and funders.	Northland CDEM RLG	Social Economic Built Rural Cultural	Dec 2026
Plan a series of Psychological First Aid workshops at key locations across Tai Tokerau	NZ Red Cross Northland CDEM Te Whatu Ora	Social Rural Cultural	Dec 2026

Housing

Action	Lead agency Support agencies	Relevant Recovery environments	Expected date to be completed
Meet with HUD and RLG to assess whether longer-term housing options are required for affected communities.	Northland CDEM HUD RLG	Social Built Economic Rural Cultural	Completed June 2026
Advocate to central government to support locally-led projects focussed on long-term housing solutions.	HUD Northland CDEM RLG	Social Built Economic Rural Cultural	December 2026

Economic

Action	Lead agency Support agencies	Relevant Recovery environments	Expected date to be completed
Set up and work with an Economic Recovery Environment Sector Group to advocate for economic Recovery funding (led by Northland NZ in collaboration with Northland CDEM).	Northland NZ Northland CDEM Iwi economic development representatives MSD TPK MPI MBIE Northland Regional Council and district council economic development teams as required Chambers of commerce as required Infrastructure representatives where relevant	Economic Social Rural Cultural	To continue as needed
Assess economic impacts and coordinate possible business grants.	Northland NZ Economic Recovery Environment Sector Group	Economic Social Rural Cultural	To continue as needed

Convene meetings between NorthPark owners and leaseholders with NRC Rivers and Hydrology teams, Northland NZ, and Kaitaia Business Association, to review the causes and impacts of the March weather event, as well as future flood mitigation works.	Kaitaia Business Association Northland NZ Northland CDEM Northland Regional Council	Economic Natural	Completed (15 June 2026 and 27 August)

Rural

Action	Lead agency Support agencies	Relevant Recovery environments	Expected date to be completed
Coordinate the NAET group (Northland Adverse Events Team – Rural Support Trust, MPI, Northland CDEM, and rural member and peak bodies) in Recovery.	RST & Northland CDEM NAET members	Social Economic Built Natural Rural Cultural	To continue as needed
Request the MSD Regional Commissioner to stand up Enhanced Taskforce Green (ETFG) for support to farmers, lifestyle block holders, and whenua Māori.	Northland CDEM MSD NAET	Social Economic Built Natural Rural Cultural	Completed (ETFG not stood up, but on-ground Recovery work completed via Flexiwage Project in the Community)
Apply for funding for Rural Support Trust support for flood recovery wellbeing events for Northland rural communities.	Northland CDEM MPI RST	Social Economic Built Natural Rural Cultural	Completed

Natural

Action	Lead agency Support agencies	Relevant Recovery environments	Expected date to be completed
Remove vessels grounded and sunk in severe weather events, as well as debris, trees, and forestry slash where relevant.	NRC Harbourmaster	Natural Social Built	Completed

Meet with DOC to establish whole-of-event impacts and any regional coordination needed.	Northland CDEM DOC	Natural Social Built Economic Rural Cultural	Completed
Advocate for a small-scale revegetation programme to be stood up to assist with slip remediation and land stabilisation.	Northland CDEM NRC	Natural Economic Social Rural Cultural	Funding submission made to DIA. Advocacy to continue as needed.

Science and hazard data support (NRC led)

Action	Lead agency Support agencies	Relevant Recovery environments	Expected date to be completed
Provide hazard data and analysis to district councils as needed.	NRC Northland CDEM	Natural Social Built Economic	To continue as needed

Built – critical infrastructure

Action	Lead agency Support agencies	Relevant Recovery environments	Expected date to be completed
Work with Northland Lifelines Group members on any suggested regulatory review, primarily tree zone regulations.	Northland CDEM Northland Lifelines Group	Built Economic Social Natural	Completed

Regional coordination, national liaison, regional funding submissions

Action	Lead agency Support agencies	Relevant Recovery environments	Expected date to be completed
Coordinate funding submissions to NEMA (and Cabinet/all-of-government) from district councils, Group Recovery Office, Northland NZ, Ngātiwai Trust Board, and Regional Leadership Group (and in support of existing submission by Te Kahu o Taonui at Prime Minister's request).	Northland CDEM	Built Economic Social Natural	January and March submissions made Negotiations to continue as needed

What guides our Recovery work

As noted in the Risks | Mōereatanga section of this plan (page 51), Recovery is not controllable and outcomes can't be guaranteed (especially due to local Recovery costs often exceeding local government budgets, but with additional funding decisions being made at a national level).

In this context, we don't believe it's possible – or fair to communities and stakeholders – to promise that all Recovery outcomes will be achieved, or state what 'success' looks like. Similarly, we don't used the term 'end state' when speaking about Recovery – for some of the most-affected community members, Recovery doesn't 'end', and it would be disrespectful for us to suggest that it should.

Instead, we prefer to speak about what matters to us, and what guides our work. In addition to completing as many of the actions listed above as possible, we commit to:

- working collaboratively with communities and stakeholders
- working through a lens of responsibilities and obligations to those who have been affected by the events
- working in ways that centre community interests
- respecting the autonomy of local communities, district councils, other government agencies, business and rural member/peak bodies, and others – not 'getting the in the way' of others' work, but being of value when possible
- acting as advocates, especially on behalf of disadvantaged communities, as well as local businesses and the rural sector.

Northland CDEM has experience working within the complexities and limitations of Recovery work during previous events, and will provide whatever support and coordination is possible within such constraints.

Rae ki te Rae Manaaki Recovery Hubs

After the January and March events, the Northland CDEM Group and NRC supported local community Recovery work by Far North District Council and Whangarei District Council in coordinating and staffing Rae ki te Rae Manaaki Recovery Hubs.

Agencies who supported these Recovery Hubs included:

- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)
- Ministry for Housing and Urban Development
- Department for Internal Affairs
- Te Puni Kōkiri
- Te Whatu Ora
- New Zealand Red Cross
- Far North District Council and Whangarei District Council
- Northland Regional Council
- Taskforce Kiwi
- Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management
- Hauora Māori providers.

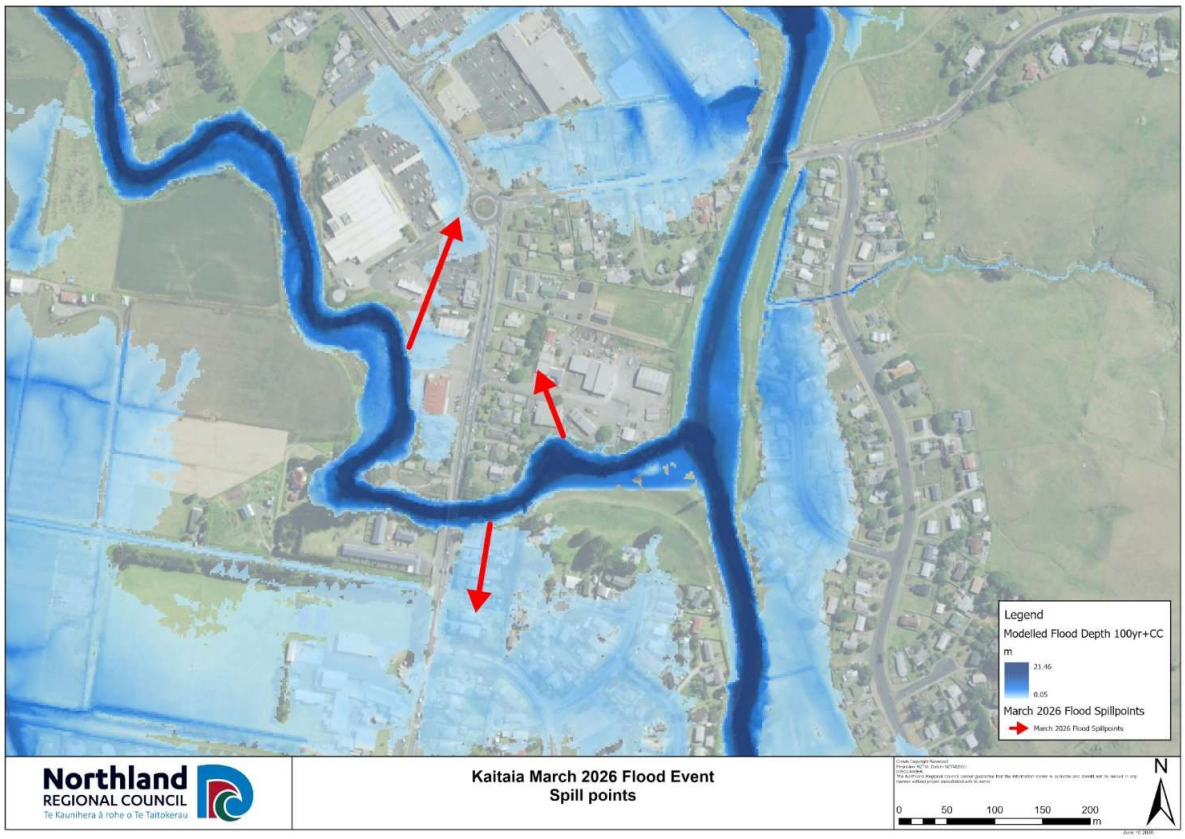
These Recovery Hubs supported hundreds of impacted whānau in communities by providing one-stop, in-person access to information, advice, and assistance, with government and non-government agencies co-located to deliver coordinated, timely support.



Kaitāia flood mitigation works

During the March 2026 event, the Awanui River recorded flow rates of 413 cubic metres per second, nearly double that experienced in previous floods (see graph on page 9), and significantly greater than the Awanui Flood Scheme's design of 335 cubic metres per second.

This flow rate was 100 cubic metres per second higher than what would be expected in a one-in-one-hundred-year major flood, and despite large-scale flood mitigation works, the Awanui River overtopped at three places:



Flood mitigation works completed before March 2026

NRC flood mitigation works in Kaitāia to March 2026 had included 6 kilometres of stopbanks, 5 kilometres of benching, 2.2 kilometres of spillways, 1.2 kilometres of scour protection, 200 metres of timber floodwalls, 750 000 cubic metres of earthworks, 15 000 cubic metres of rock stabilisation, replacing or upgrading 24 floodgates, and installing an extra span at the Quarry Road bridge. Works also included significant vegetation clearing in the lower Awanui channel.

These works provided protection to key Kaitāia locations, such as the Switzer residential care home, the Milky Way/Bells Produce area, the Donald Road bridge, and the Kaitāia business and town centre overall. Photos from the 1958 flood which recorded 221 cubic metres per second flows showed deep floodwaters throughout the main street. This flooding didn't occur during either the 2023 or 2026 events, thanks to these mitigation works.

Flood mitigation works completed since March 2026

Since March, the NRC Rivers Team have completed additional flood mitigation works, including:

Matilda Place/Davis Street Stopbank: During an assessment on the Thursday after the March event, staff noticed a slip affecting roughly half of the width of the Matilda Place/Davis Street stopbank. Staff mobilized the quarry and a local contractor, using approximately 1700 cubic metres of quarry rock spalls and multiple large earthmoving machines. This urgent work, completed over the Easter weekend, potentially prevented damage to hundreds of houses.

Whangatane Spillway: Staff directed repairs along the Whangatane Spillway at the JNL stopbank which had overtopped in two places. Repair work on the Oinui floodgate and scour points at various stopbanks also required earthwork repairs.

Awanui River: The stopbank downstream of Pak'nSave and the stopbank behind the Rules property were repaired. Staff also removed logs and debris, sprayed vegetation, mulched, and drilled and filled larger targeted trees in the Awanui River channel from Pak'nSave downstream. These trees will be removed in spring or summer, preventing future possible river blockages.

Tarawhataroa: The NRC Rivers Team coordinated debris removal opposite the Switzer residential care home and cleared the channel of silt and debris, including the Waihoe channel discharging to Lake Tangonge. This work should improve the water quality of the lake.

Future flood mitigation works for Kaitāia

On 25 August, NRC approved expenditure for additional works in the Milky Way / Bell's Produce area, focussed on the points that caused flooding to North Park and Matilda Place.



Stopbank, vegetation clearing, and widened flow path work near Bell's produce.

Mapping rainfall induced landslides after a severe weather event

The 18 January storm cell that formed off the Whangaruru coast was a significant, if localised, event that triggered landslides along the coast between Cape Brett and Whangārei Harbour.

In late January, Earth Science NZ (formerly GNS Science) undertook a reconnaissance flight of the affected area to help identify where landslides presented a risk to life. This reconnaissance flight identified that there had been a significant number of landslides across the affected region.

Landslide susceptibility is a known gap in Northland's hazardscape understanding, and Earth Science NZ had identified low confidence in rainfall induced landslide forecast modelling in Northland due to the poor understanding of the susceptibility risk. The January weather event provided NRC and Earth Science NZ an opportunity to start to address that gap.

Earth Science NZ are leading 'Hōretireti Whenua | Sliding Lands', a project to develop nation-wide probabilistic models for earthquake-induced and rainfall-induced landslides of varying landslide types and sizes. Mapping the landslides triggered by a specific rain event will improve the model outputs for Northland.

Discussions with Auckland Council emphasised the value of mapping past landslide events when developing landslide susceptibility maps that can show areas at risk of future landslides. NRC therefore agreed to source new LiDAR and orthographic aerial photos for the affected area to ensure that the landslides could be mapped accurately. Aerial Survey Ltd were contracted to do this work and flew the area in March 2026.

When complete, the LiDAR and aerial photos will be published on the LINZ website where they can be accessed by iwi/hapū, communities, local councils, lifeline agencies, and other interested parties. These are expected to be published by the end of 2026.

The mapped landslides will be available on the ESNZ and NRC websites. These are also expected to be published by the end of 2026.

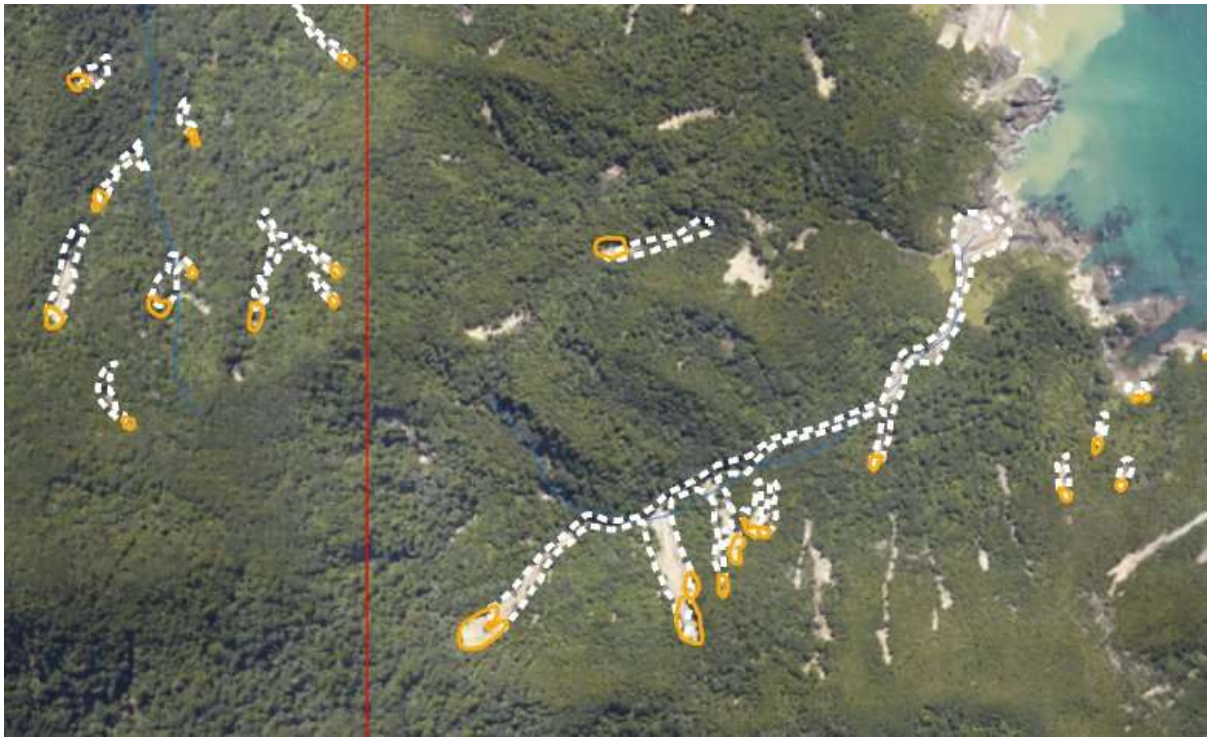
This project will provide a significant increase in Northland's hazard understanding, and provide a good platform for risk reduction and readiness.



Landslides in Ōakura identified in the ESNZ reconnaissance flight, January 2026.



Ōakura orthographic aerial photo March 2026 (photo by Aerials Survey Ltd).



Draft mapping of landslide features by ESNZ. Orange features correspond to source areas and the white represent debris trails.

Agencies involved in this Recovery

Because disaster Recovery covers almost all aspects of society, Recovery involves many agencies, organisations, and communities. Some of these are shown below; many local community members and groups also contribute to Recovery.

Agency / organisation	Area of responsibility
Beef + Lamb New Zealand	• provide support to farmers
Dairy NZ	• provide support to dairy farmers
Department of Conservation | Te Papa Atawhai	• repair and restore DOC assets and infrastructure
Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) | Te Tari Taiwhenua	• coordinate DIA funding to region • continue to coordinate other BAU funding that supports communities (such as the Oranga Marae fund and the Lotteries fund)
Far North District Council | Te Kaunihera o Tai Tokerau ki te Raki	• coordinate Recovery activities locally • coordinate local community wellbeing / 'social' Recovery • restore Council assets (roads, three waters, parks) • coordinate housing: temporary accommodation, building assessments, and climate adaptation projects
Federated Farmers of New Zealand	• provide support to farmers
Fonterra	• provide support to dairy farmers
Horticulture New Zealand	• provide support to growers
Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities	• repair and restore assets and infrastructure
Kaitaia Business Association	• provide support to businesses
Kaipara District Council	• coordinate Recovery activities locally • coordinate local community wellbeing / 'social' Recovery • restore Council assets (roads, three waters, parks) • coordinate housing: temporary accommodation, building assessments, and climate adaptation projects
Māori health and social service agencies, rūnanga, trust boards	• support local communities • connect with wider services and support
Ministry of Business and Innovation (MBIE)	• deliver Temporary Accommodation Service • provide New Zealand Claims Resolution Service (NZCRS)
Ministry of Housing and Urban	• work with local communities on future housing

Development (HUD)	project ideas informed by the 2026 weather events
Ministry for Primary Industries | Manatū Ahu Matua	• provide support to farmers where possible • collaborate with rural sector on possible rural Recovery projects • provide data and case studies to support funding applications
Ministry for the Environment – Manatū Mō Te Taiao	• provide support to district councils via the Emergency Waste Fund (EWF)
Ministry for Social Development (MSD)	• coordinate Civil Defence payments • provide assistance to affected communities under MSD BAU activities • coordinate Flexiwage Project in the Community
National Public Health Service	• provide advice on public health activities and messaging as required • coordinate any emerging public health Recovery issues
NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency)	• provide national support for regional and local Recovery activities • coordinate Recovery surge support staff as required • coordinate the all-of-government funding process
New Zealand Police | Nga Pirihimana O Aotearoa	• provide data on increases on family violence and self-harm if relevant
New Zealand Red Cross | Rīpeka Whero Aotearoa	• provide financial assistance where possible • deliver psychological first aid training to communities (in collaboration with Northland CDEM)
Ngātiwai Trust Board	• support local community • prepare housing funding submission for central government
Northern Wairoa Vegetable Growers Association Inc	• provide support to growers
Northland Adverse Events Team (NAET)	• coordinate combined Rural Recovery initiatives
Northland CDEM	• coordinate Recovery regionally • set regional Recovery priorities • coordinate, and advocate for, funding • monitor and evaluate • deliver Rae ki te Rae community Recovery hubs for FNDC and WDC as required • convene Northland Lifelines Group to discuss possible regulatory reform
Northland NZ	• coordinate regional-level economic Recovery activities (in collaboration with Group Recovery Manager)

	• convene Economic Recovery Environment Sector Group meetings • provide economic impact data where possible • prepare and/or support funding applications for economic Recovery
Northland Lifelines Group	• review tree setback regulations and propose regulatory reform if needed
Northland Regional Council | Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau	• Climate Action and Natural Hazards: provide science and hazard data and analysis to Recovery Managers as required • Land Management: deliver on-ground workshops on slip prevention and remediation (if possible) • Rivers and Natural Hazards: provide technical advice and support; collaborate with Kaitaia Business Association on flood mitigation information sessions • Hydrology: provide event summary data • Science Manager: advise as required
NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA)	• repair and restore assets and infrastructure
Oranga Tamariki	• provide data on increases on family violence if relevant
Regional Leadership Group (RLG)	• coordinate regional government agencies and Councils • provide regional project ideas for central government funding • advocate to central government for Recovery funding for the region
Regional Public Service Commissioner	• ensure coordinated action by regional government agencies (working in collaboration with Group Recovery Manager) • attend National Funders' Forum hui • advocate for region to central government
Rural Support Te Tai Tokerau	• convene the NAET (Northland Adverse Events Team) / Rural Support Recovery Programme Group) • collate information about rural impacts • coordinate collaboration dinners and other events as time and funds permit • provide mental health and other support to farmers
Te Kahu o Taonui	• represent Iwi positions and interests to central government (including possible projects to fund) • attend Northland CDEM Coordinating Executive Group meetings to provide executive oversight.
Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Māori	• administer the Māori Development Fund (MDF) and

Development (TPK)	Marae Emergency Response Fund 2026 to support communities of Te Tai Tokerau.
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education	• repair and restore schools • coordinate transportation of students who have impacted road access • provide wider support to students where needed
Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand	• provide psychosocial support services as required • provide staff and information for community Recovery hubs and other events as required
Whakaora Kai Food Rescue Northland (155 Whare Āwhina)	• provide kai to communities (through local organisations and agencies) affected by the events
Whangārei District Council	• coordinate Recovery activities locally • coordinate local community wellbeing / 'social' Recovery • restore Council assets (roads, three waters, parks) • coordinate housing: temporary accommodation, building assessments, and climate adaptation projects

Risks | Mōereatanga

No Recovery is perfect, linear, predictable, or controllable. Traditional strategic planning and 'logic model' approaches, which suggest clear actions automatically leading to desired outcomes, can give a false sense of controllability, outcomes, and accountability.

Instead, Recovery is the 'art of the possible'. Rather than the command-and-control ethos of Response, Recovery is based on coordination, advocacy, negotiation, and collaboration. And resources, funding, and capabilities can change without notice.

In that context, this current combined Recovery has some significant risks. Most of these are covered in the relevant sections of the Plan above, but it's important to highlight two key funding risks here.

Risk	**Responsibility**	**Mitigation (local and regional)**
Large unbudgeted costs for councils and limited national funding: NEMA have informed us that no new Recovery funding exists for these events, and funding will be dependent on government agencies sourcing from existing budgets. The outcome of this is currently unknown.	NEMA	Explore other potential funding opportunities (such as DIA). Record unfunded Recovery activities as possible projects for

		future funding opportunities.
Regional government funding and support is currently unclear. Projects and funding arrangements that were stood up quickly in past Recoveries have either been slower to start this time, or are not being funded or supported. This creates risk that Recovery priorities identified by communities and stakeholders will not be resourced.	Regional government agencies (primarily DIA, MSD, MPI)	As above

Reporting, monitoring, and evaluation He mahi tuhi pūrongo, aroturuki, arotake

Monitoring and evaluation of this Recovery will be done by each District Council of its own Recovery Plan, and by Northland CDEM of the regional Recovery responsibilities. Reporting will be made to NEMA as required and possible, and to the Northland CDEM Coordinating Executive Group and Joint Committee.

Winding down and exit strategy | Te otinga

This Recovery will be wound down, with a formal exit strategy, once all of the actions in the final Recovery Plan are either:

- complete
- formally reassessed as no longer relevant, or
- able to be incorporated into Northland's Councils' business-as-usual work.

Once the Recovery work is assessed as complete, the final action will be to undertake an internal lessons management review. This review will include:

- evaluating the Recovery work itself
- capturing ideas and improvements for Recovery planning and actions for future events
- developing suggestions of future Reduction work that Regional and District Councils can take to reduce the likelihood or impact of future events.
- creating suggestions of future Readiness actions that Councils, communities, and households can take to prepare for future events.

For more information

If you have any questions about this Recovery Plan, please contact:

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Appendix 1 – 5C (concurrent, consecutive, cascading, compounding, and contingent) considerations

While the three 2026 events have been classified as 'Minor' using the national Recovery Severity Assessment Tool, some level of coordination is still needed. The term 'minor' can also be misleading – it doesn't mean that the events were minor for those who they affected.

For context, Cyclone Gabrielle, though a billion-dollar-plus event in total for Northland, requiring three years of active coordination (with more years required to complete all Recovery activities), and the largest Recovery Northland CDEM had ever coordinated, would have only been classified as a 'Moderate' (or possibly a low 'Major') Recovery. This reflects that the Severity Assessment Tool factors in Major, Severe, and Catastrophic levels.

When speaking with stakeholders in early 2026, we regularly heard the word 'cumulative'. However, 'cumulative' can be hard to define in a context of Recovery – for example, which impacts are cumulative and which aren't? What about things that preceded an event, rather than followed it? And so on. When we unpacked the word 'cumulative', we found there were actually '5Cs' at play: concurrent, consecutive, cascading, compounding, and contingent.

A growing body of research has identified the importance of 'consecutive and concurrent' or 'compounding and cascading' events for emergency readiness, recovery, and resilience (see, for example *Resilience for Compounding and Cascading Events*, National Academies Press, 2022). To this, we can add contingent events, such as current geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and increased costs, that are impacting Recoveries around New Zealand.

The disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency management sectors are only recently researching these intersections, and Recovery theory and practice about these is relatively new. There are only few examples in New Zealand's CDEM history of consecutive events, although these are increasing in frequency and severity. Some examples include the Canterbury Earthquake Sequence, the Auckland Anniversary Floods and subsequent Cyclone Gabrielle impacts on Auckland, and other consecutive weather events during 2025.

Considering these '5Cs' through a lens of Recovery, and for the 2026 severe weather events for Northland, helps us understand more about the relationships of these events, their impacts, risks, and opportunities. This approach is not just theoretical or 'academic'. By helping us understand the issues better, it helps us to look for real-world solutions.

5 Cs	**Definition (with a Recovery focus)**	**Current example**
Consecutive	When events happen after each other. This can (but doesn't necessarily have to) exacerbate existing Recovery activities.	The three weather events of early 2026 occurred in quick succession (January, March, and April).

Concurrent	When events occur at the same time, or Recoveries for different events must be delivered at the same time.	Recoveries from the three events are occurring concurrently. This can pose some problems when the national funding arrangements are considered separately for each, but the delivery is concurrent. Also, the subsequent events 'overtook' some of the planning, arrangements, and work of the prior Recoveries. In some cases, this 'reset to zero' or made irrelevant some of the prior work; in other cases, the overall coordination and delivery was made more complex.
Cascading	When the effects of one event can cause new effects / events.	The very high soil moisture content on farms caused by the January and March events led to flooding, crop damage, and pasture loss during Vaianu (which would otherwise possibly not have occurred).
Compounding	When the effects of a later event can compound or complexify existing effects.	Rain from the March and Vaianu events compounded some existing impacted roads and made repairs more complex.
Contingent	Other events and factors that may impact on the current events.	The war in the Middle East is causing supply chain disruptions (especially impacting the price of fuel, asphalt, and building materials) that will increase the costs of the current Recovery activities. Cost of living pressures are also likely reducing households' abilities to make necessary minor repairs.

Given the above considerations, and as with any Recovery, we expect to see more 'invisible' impacts and consequences emerge from the 2026 events in the coming weeks and months.

Appendix 2 – Acronyms list

Throughout this Plan, most acronyms are spelt out in their initial use. The following list can be used as a reference not only for acronyms that might appear in this plan, but for other communication, plans, and documents that may appear during this Recovery.

BAU – business as usual
CDEM – Civil Defence Emergency Management
CEG – Coordinating Executive Group (for Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management)
CLC – Community-Led Centre (evacuation / manaaki centre)
DIA – Department of Internal Affairs | Te Tari Taiwhenua
DOC – Department of Conservation | Te Papa Atawhai
DRR – disaster risk reduction
ECC – Emergency Coordination Centre (activated at regional level for CDEM coordination of emergencies)
EOC – Emergency Operations Centre (activated at local level for CDEM coordination of emergencies)
ERF – Emergency Relief Fund (sometimes called a Mayoral Relief Fund)
ETFG – Enhanced Taskforce Green
EWF – Emergency Waste Fund
FNDC – Far North District Council | Te Kaunihera o Tai Tokerau ki te Raki
GRM – Group Recovery Manager (based at Northland CDEM Group)
GWM – Group Welfare Manager (based at Northland CDEM Group)
HCA – holistic consequence analysis; a summary of impacts and consequences from emergencies, usually produced by CDEM Groups at the end of the Response phase
ICNZ – Insurance Council Of New Zealand – Te Kāhui Inihua o Aotearoa
ICP – Installation Control Point (The physical point of connection where electricity is supplied to a home, business, or property. Note that for assessing power outages, this is not the number of *people* affected, but the sites; most houses will have more than one person.)
KDC – Kaipara District Council | Kaipara te Oranganui
LRM – Local Recovery Manager/s (based at District Councils)
MBIE – Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise | Hikina Whakatutuki
MDF – Māori Development Fund (administered by TPK)
MoE – Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education
MPI – Ministry for Primary Industries | Mantū Ahu Matua
MRF – Mayoral Relief Fund
MSD – Ministry of Social Development | Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora
NAET – Northland Adverse Events Team (rural sector emergency management group, comprising peak rural sector bodies, Rural Support Trust, MPI, and Northland CDEM)
NEMA – National Emergency Management Agency | Te Rākau Whakamarumaru
NLG – Northland Lifelines Group (entities who manage critical infrastructure for the region)
NRC – Northland Regional Council | Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau
RLG – Te Kahu Hononga | Regional Leadership Group
RST – Rural Support Trust
TAS – Temporary Accommodation Service (run by MBIE)
TKoT – Te Kahu o Taonui
TPK – Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Māori Development
WDC – Whangarei District Council
WWTP – wastewater treatment plant

Te Mahere Whakaoranga mō Te Tai Tokerau | Northland Regional Recovery Plan 2026: January Severe Weather Event, March Severe Weather Event, Cyclone Vaianu.

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