

## Waikato Regional Council: Position Statement on Provision of Natural Hazard Information for LIMs

### Purpose

This statement outlines Waikato Regional Council's (WRC) approach to meeting its obligations under section 44C of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and the Local Government (Natural Hazard Information in Land Information Memoranda) Regulations 2025 (The Regulations) (collectively referred to as LGOIMA natural hazard information requirements).

It reflects legal requirements, Guidance from the Department of Internal Affairs, and WRC's operational context, including its Regional Hazards Portal and any automated reporting systems.

Section 44C of LGOIMA and the accompanying regulations require that regional councils provide territorial authorities with natural hazard and climate change information.

A regional council must, as soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, provide to a territorial authority within or partly within its region —

(a) information that identifies the following, to the extent that the information is known to the regional council:

- (i) each natural hazard, and each impact of climate change that exacerbates natural hazards, that affects land in the territorial authority's district:
  - (ii) each potential natural hazard, and each potential impact of climate change that exacerbates natural hazards, to the extent that the regional council is satisfied that there is a reasonable possibility that the hazard or impact may affect land in the territorial authority's district (whether now or in the future):
  - (iii) the cumulative or combined effects of the hazards and impacts (referred to above)
- (b) any further information required by the regulations to make the information provided under paragraph (a) more understandable.

The information must be summarised and presented in the form required by the regulations.

Section 44C is intended to supplement section 44B of LGOIMA which states that land information memoranda ("LIM") contain understandable information about natural hazards and impacts of climate change that exacerbate natural hazards in relation to land.

This statement also incorporates WRC's Natural Hazard Information Hierarchy, which supports interpretation of hazard data by clarifying its scale, intended use, and fitness-for-purpose. The

hierarchy has been adapted to reflect legislative requirements while preserving scientific integrity.

### Our Commitment

WRC is committed to:

Promoting public safety and informed decision-making

Acting in good faith and transparency in the provision of natural hazard information

Meeting our statutory obligations

Supporting territorial authorities with accessible, usable hazard data

### Hazard information that has not been finalised

WRC acknowledges that, for the purpose of the LGOIMA natural hazard information requirements, it is possible for it to ‘know’ about a piece of information that identifies a natural hazard that it has commissioned or is produced without it having gone through all of the processes for quality assurance, review, final sign-off and publication.<sup>1</sup>

However, to ensure clarity and so it does not mislead, WRC defines natural hazard information stages as follows:

\*References to ‘potential natural hazards or natural hazards’ refer to all information within the scope of s 44C

Information Type: Information associated with:	Description
Work in progress	<p>WRC is not required to meet a specific level of accuracy or robustness when disclosing natural hazard information under the LGOIMA natural hazard information requirements.</p> <p>Sometimes information may be so uncertain or incomplete that there is no reasonable basis to conclude it <i>identifies</i> a potential natural hazard or natural hazard. In such cases, WRC will classify it as <b>Work in Progress</b>. This information will not be provided to territorial authorities for the purposes of LGOIMA disclosure. This classification may apply to data that is speculative, exploratory, or at an early stage of research or development.</p> <p>A change in status from <b>Work in Progress</b> to <b>Draft</b> does not indicate confidence in accuracy or reliability—only that WRC considers it has met the statutory test for disclosure.</p>

<sup>1</sup> **Known means that the TA or RC knows about the information. It doesn’t mean that they consider the information is accurate**, nor that the information has been tabled/ adopted by elected members. Source: Internal Affairs Guidance

Draft	<p>Draft information has been reviewed, and a determination made, that WRC <i>knows</i> the information <i>identifies</i> a potential natural hazard or natural hazard (the statutory threshold for disclosure purposes). This review does <b>not</b> assess scientific accuracy, completeness, or reliability beyond what is necessary to meet the statutory test.</p> <p>Confidence in the accuracy or robustness of draft information may be minimal or variable. The limitations that apply to finalised information (see below) also apply to reviewed drafts.</p> <p>Drafts can be finalised or superseded by newer drafts or better information. Users should ensure they are referencing the most current version of material. In some instances, draft information may be provided solely to meet statutory requirements intended to put recipients on notice that this information exists. Recipients must undertake their own due diligence.</p>
Finalised	<p>Finalised information has undergone internal review and approval in accordance with the relevant WRC processes for public release.</p> <p>While every reasonable effort is made to ensure the accuracy of publicly released information, users should be aware that natural hazard information is inherently complex and subject to ongoing scientific development. In addition, conflicting or inconsistent information may exist across sources or over time. Users should refer to the accompanying metadata, classification hierarchy, version history, and publication date to support accurate interpretation and understand the limitations of the information provided.</p> <p>Finalised information is intended to inform general understanding and statutory disclosure. It should not be interpreted as site-specific advice or used as the sole basis for decision-making without further investigation. It may be superseded over time as better information becomes available.</p>
Superseded	<p>Where WRC holds multiple pieces of information identifying the same hazard with no material differences, the most up-to-date information will be provided.</p>

As a result, some information disclosed under LGOIMA may later be replaced and therefore classified as <b>Superseded</b> .
--

The Natural Hazard Information Hierarchy complements these stages by classifying hazard data according to its recommended scale of use and intended application. The hierarchy helps contextualise this data for territorial authorities, LIM recipients and public users of the Waikato Regional Hazards Portal and WRC's natural hazard data.

### Use of Waikato Regional Hazards Portal

WRC maintains a publicly accessible Regional Hazards Portal that allows users to visualise spatial natural hazard data and general information about that hazard. Users can also open the Waikato Data Portal to access WRC spatial hazard data and metadata. The Regional Hazards Portal is the primary mechanism for delivering natural hazard information to the public. The need for enhancements and automated reporting functionality is being considered to assist compliance with the Regulations.

### Metadata and Technical Report Compliance

All spatial datasets shared via the portal will include metadata. Technical reports shared externally through the WRC website, the portal or to territorial authorities will meet the minimum requirements under Regulation 9, including title, author, scope, date, and access method.

### Plain Language Summaries

WRC will provide plain language summaries for council-commissioned reports and datasets where they assist public understanding.

### Territorial Authority Discretion

WRC acknowledges that territorial authorities must include natural hazard information provided by WRC in LIMs if they determine it is applicable to the land subject to the LIM request.

WRC's legal obligation is to provide all known hazard information in good faith. This will be accompanied by metadata and plain language summaries where appropriate. If territorial authorities include this information in LIM the qualifications and limitations described in WRC's Metadata and Natural Hazard Information Hierarchy should be retained to support accurate interpretation and ensure fitness-for-purpose is understood by the LIM recipient.

While the RMA definition of natural hazard is inclusive, WRC acknowledges that not all hazard information is suitable for property-specific interpretation. The Natural Hazard Information Hierarchy supports territorial authorities in distinguishing between general information and data suitable for use at regional-scale, local to regional scale and property to local scale, ensuring that LIMs remain focused. This approach aligns with legislative requirements to provide all known hazard information, while supporting informed and context-sensitive use.

## Disclaimers and qualifying information

This position statement supplements but does not replace any terms of use, disclaimers, limitations, and qualifications that accompany information that WRC provides for the purpose of providing information to meet LGOIMA natural hazard information requirements.

The Terms of Use and Spatial Terms of Use apply to information provided through the Waikato Regional Hazards Portal.

Disclaimers and qualifying information support informed and context-sensitive use. They should be referred to as important features of any information provided for LGOIMA natural hazard information purposes.

Natural Hazards Information provided by WRC may include draft information that has moved beyond work in progress. Inclusion in LIMs does not imply endorsement, accuracy, or completeness. All hazard information is shared in good faith under the protection of s44D of LGOIMA.

## Metadata

Metadata helps users learn more about the data and understand the fitness-for-purpose of different types of data. Where highly technical it may in some cases benefit from a plain language summary.

Users accessing natural hazard information via the Waikato Regional Hazards Portal should refer to the metadata to understand the scale, limitations, and intended use of each dataset. This supports informed interpretation and helps distinguish between general information, indicative regional data, local scale data and property-specific assessments.

While originally developed before the current legislation, the Natural Hazards Information Hierarchy is used in WRC natural hazards metadata and has been adapted to reflect the requirement that all known hazard information must be provided to territorial authorities. This hierarchy specifically supports interpretation of WRC natural hazards data quality, scale, and applicability.

## NATURAL HAZARD INFORMATION HIERARCHY

### Important caution: fitness of purpose of information for property-level decision-making

#### Caution:

Under current legislation, WRC must provide all known natural hazard information to territorial authorities.

WRC has an obligation to provide information for each natural hazard, and each impact of climate change that exacerbates natural hazards, that affects **land** in the territorial authority's district.

However, it should be noted that WRC does not have an obligation to provide specific information about a specific piece of land.

Territorial authorities are responsible for determining whether the information is applicable to the land subject to a LIM request. If included in a LIM, the qualifications and limitations described in the applicable metadata and this hierarchy should be retained to support accurate interpretation.

The default position is that most of WRC's information is not designed to be used for property specific purposes. Property to local scale information is the exception. The rest of the information is **indicative information** whose fitness for purpose is described in this hierarchy.

The inclusion of indicative information on a LIM is subject to the territorial authority's determination of relevance to the land concerned.

Territorial Authorities may potentially include some indicative information on a LIM as relevant to the land concerned due to legislative requirements.

**Inclusion of indicative information on a LIM does not make it suitable to be used for property specific purposes.** It will not have been designed to reflect site-specific conditions and may not even be applicable to a particular parcel of land.

If included in a LIM the qualifications and limitations described in the applicable metadata and this hierarchy should be retained to support accurate interpretation.

### 1. Property to local scale

Information that is suitable to be used for property specific purposes, including within District Plans, or for:

- risk assessments
- resource or building consents
- decisions that concern personal or public safety
- the conduct of commercial business

- insurance purposes
- land information memorandum reports (LIMs)

The information is based on detailed hazard modelling or hazards mapping that includes both current and future possible scenarios, along with the associated likelihoods and impacts. Users should make sure they are using the most appropriate natural hazards data available. Data held by other organisations may be better suited for property scale use or may be more up to date. Before using any of the Waikato Regional Council natural hazard data at property scale or for subdivision development purposes please [contact](#) the Waikato Regional Council Regional Resilience team for guidance. Further information on resource consenting is available [here](#).

## 2. Local to regional scale

Information that is suitable to be used for District or Regional Plans, or as an initial indicator of where further investigation may be required. This information is NOT suitable for use at property scale, or for:

- property specific risk assessments
- resource or building consents
- decisions that concern personal or public safety
- the conduct of commercial business
- insurance purposes

Waikato Regional Council recommends further investigation and using other applicable natural hazard data, if available, for property specific purposes. The information is generally based on modelling or hazard mapping but may not include both current and future possible scenarios. Users should make sure they are using the most appropriate natural hazards data available. Data held by other organisations may be better suited for property scale use or may be more up to date. Before using any of the Waikato Regional Council natural hazard data at property scale or for subdivision development purposes please [contact](#) the Waikato Regional Council Regional Resilience team for guidance. Note that further information on resource consenting is available [here](#).

## 3. Regional scale

Information that is suitable to be used for the Regional Policy Statement, or regional scale studies/projects, or as an initial indicator of where further investigation may be required. This information is NOT suitable for use at property scale, or for:

- district planning
- property specific risk assessments
- resource or building consents
- decisions that concern personal or public safety
- the conduct of commercial business
- insurance purposes

Waikato Regional Council recommends further investigation and using other applicable natural hazard data, if available, for property specific purposes. The information is generally based on previous events or historic mapping/aerial imagery or LiDAR. Users should make sure they are using the most appropriate natural hazards data available. Data held by other organisations may be better suited for property scale use or may be more up to date. Before using any of the Waikato Regional Council natural hazard data at property scale or for subdivision development purposes please [contact](#) the Waikato Regional Council Regional Resilience team for guidance. Note that further information on resource consenting is available [here](#).

#### 4. General information

Information that is to be used for information purposes only, or as an initial indicator of where further investigation may be required. This information is NOT suitable for use at property scale, or for:

- regional policy development or regional scale studies/projects
- district planning
- property specific risk assessments
- resource or building consents
- decisions that concern personal or public safety
- the conduct of commercial business
- insurance purposes

This information may be a draft, that is still subject to review, or indicative only. Waikato Regional Council recommends further investigation and using other applicable natural hazard data, if available, for property specific purposes. The information is generally based on national scale mapping, indicative regional scale mapping, or susceptibility from other existing data (e.g. LiDAR data). Users should make sure they are using the most appropriate natural hazards data available. Data held by other organisations may be better suited for property scale use or may be more up to date. Before using any of the Waikato Regional Council natural hazard data at property scale or for subdivision development purposes please [contact](#) the Waikato Regional Council Regional Resilience team for guidance. Note that further information on resource consenting is available [here](#).

#### Information not currently available on the Waikato Regional Hazards Portal

Natural hazards information that is not spatial in nature, such as technical reports, may be available. Also, other spatial natural hazards information may be under development. See the WRC publications page [here](#) or [contact](#) the Waikato Regional Council Regional Resilience team for guidance.

As detailed above, WRC is putting in processes and systems to determine what type and in what form the relevant hazard and climate change information is provided to territorial authorities. There will still be a requirement for a degree of judgment from WRC in determining the relevance of any specific piece of information.