

Case study on Watercare's response to the Auckland Anniversary Flood and Cyclone Gabrielle

Rachel Hughes, Head of Communications, Watercare



## The double whammy: Auckland Anniversary weekend floods

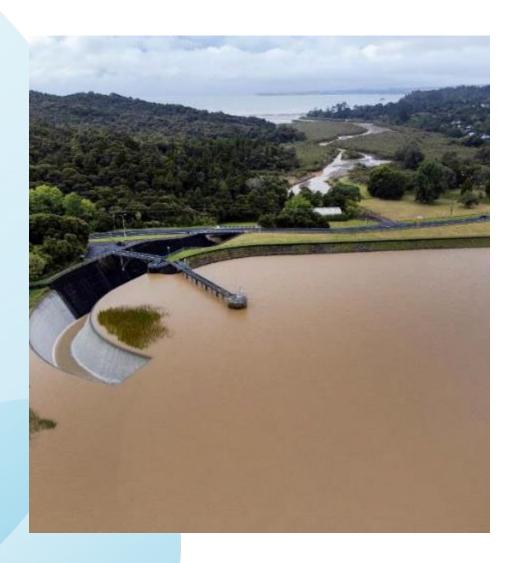








## The double whammy: Auckland Anniversary weekend floods



#### Impact on services

- Around 3,000 homes were without water for up to five days after a slip broke a watermain.
- The quality of the water in our dams deteriorated due to slips. This restricted the volume of water we could treat.
- One water treatment plant was flooded and remains offline.
- Ten wastewater pump stations were flooded, destroying their pumps and electrical systems.
- Around 100 local wastewater pipes were broken by landslides.



## The double whammy: Cyclone Gabrielle

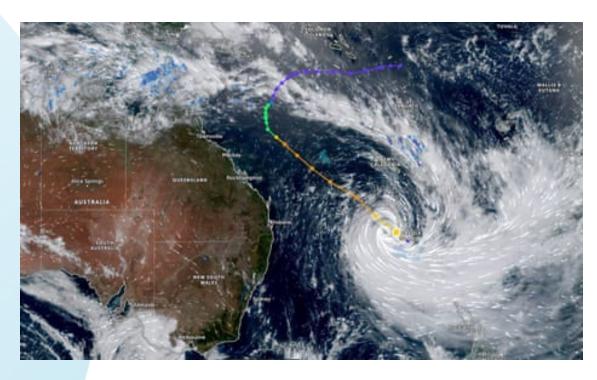
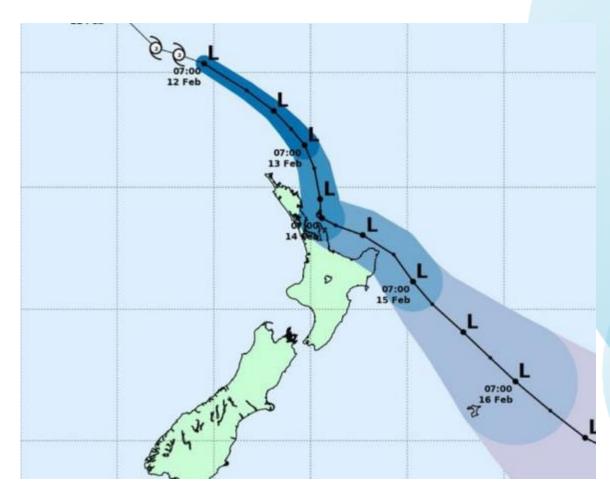


Image credits: The Guardian (above) and Radio NZ (right).





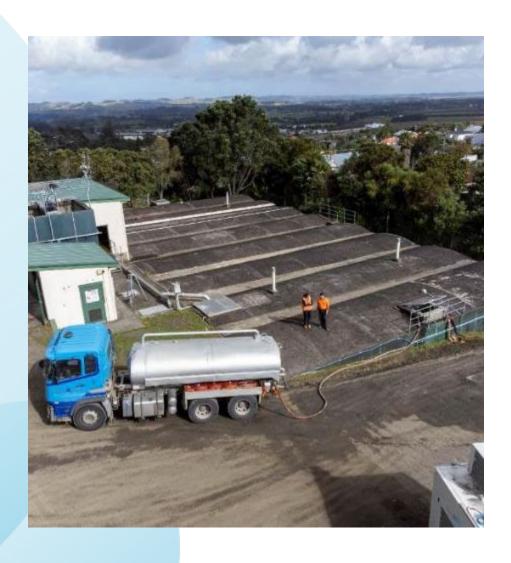
## The double whammy: Cyclone Gabrielle







### The double whammy: Cyclone Gabrielle

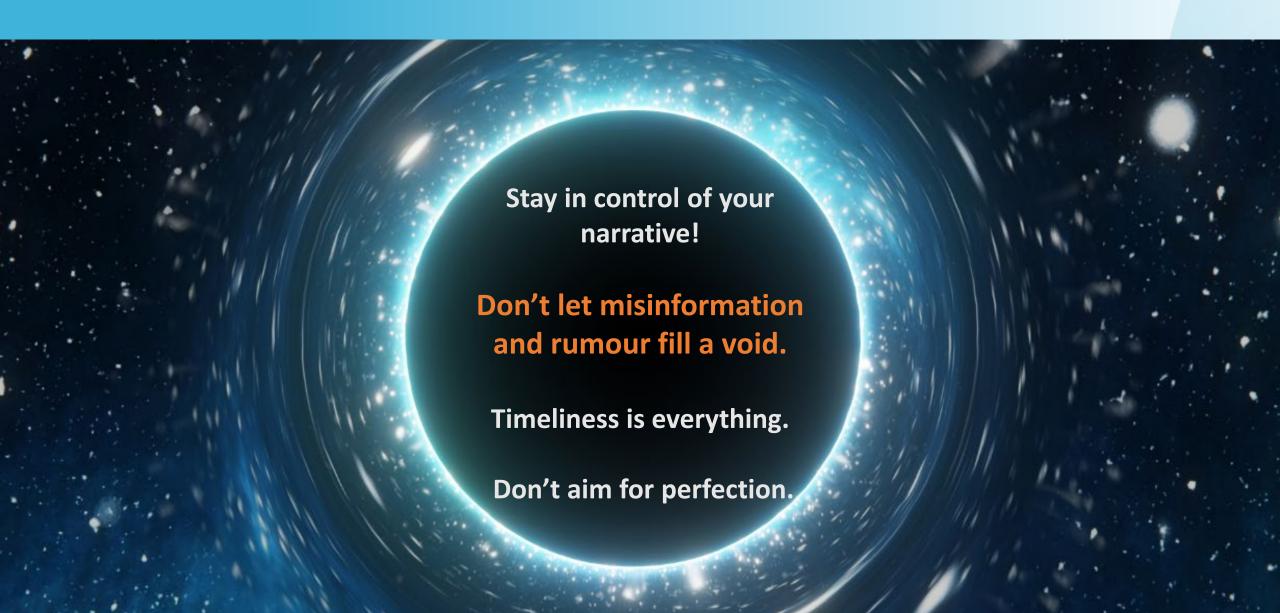


#### **Impact on services**

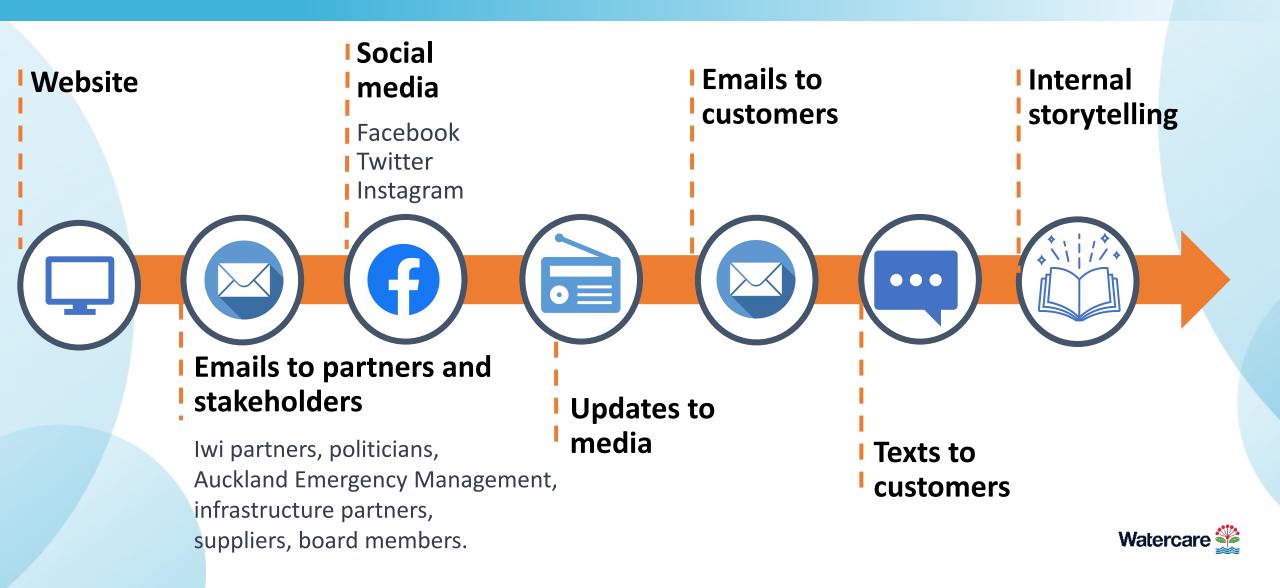
- Muriwai's water supply was severely damaged by a landslide.
- Three local water treatment plants shut down temporarily due to water quality, process, or power issues.
- Numerous local wastewater pump stations shut down temporarily due to power outages.
- The quality of the water in our dams deteriorated further due to slips.



### A strategic approach to communications



#### How we ran our communications response



#### The power of social media

We flooded our social media channels with messaging

We posted on our pages and in community groups.

We asked stakeholders to share all our content to extend reach.







# The power of being prepared





### The power of networks

#### Learnings from across the ditch

#### What our Australian colleagues old us:

- Watch out for fatigue it's a marathon
- Be clear on your priorities throughout
- Get ready to do it better next time

What we were able to do:

- Proactively offer a relief fund to impacted
- Arrange community drop in sessions

"Wow, Thank you so much for your concern and considerate offer. It is so lovely to not have to tell our story over and over." Kind regards Suzanne



a understand that Auckland Council has assessed your house as being unsafe to order. We would like to extend our deepest sympathy for your loss and the difficult time you're facing. That is why we are offering the following support to help case the challenges you may be dealing with right now:

- A one-off \$50 credit to your account to help with the cost of water that may be required for the clean-up in ancior around your house. This will allow you to use about 27,000 litres of water at no cost.
- We will suspend all wastewater charges for the next 6 months both fixed and

Should you need your Watercare services permanently disconnected, or if your meter has been damaged or moved, please ornal us on into fix after so no (with the subject line: Red Stickered Property - Permanent Disconnection) so we can support you with

We will contact you in three months' time to get a status update. Should you or your recovery contractors be able to safety visit your property in the coming days, please make sure you turn off the gate valve, if you haven't already done so.

In the meantime, should you require any support with paying your current balance please be in louch through our critice support at https://www.watercare.co.na/payme

Ngã mihi.

Amanda Singleton Chief Customer Officer Watercore Services Ltd



#### Results

"Well done, Watercare.
Plenty of timely
communication and talented
staff who performed the
physical work in an efficient
manner."

"Just a note to say that the emails are right up there with the best common sense and informative notices I've seen from utility agencies in a long time. As in probably ever."

**Customer via Facebook** 

**Customer via LinkedIn** 





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# Patai?

#### COMMUNICATING TO STAKEHOLDERS AND CUSTOMERS CRITICAL IN STORMY TIMES

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