



MĀNGERE RECOVERY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A report for the Recovery Office

December 2023



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Executive Summary

Two severe weather events in Tāmaki Makaurau in early 2023 caused widespread damage and displaced thousands of Aucklanders, with many facing ongoing needs stemming from one or both events. The Auckland Council-led Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Office has undertaken a series of needs assessments to support the development of local recovery plans; this document presents findings from the Māngere/Favona needs assessment.

Community organisations provided a wide range of services in the initial response to the flooding, including the dissemination of food, information sharing, distribution of household goods, welfare checks and relocation of affected residents to temporary accommodation. Since this time, a range of ongoing needs have emerged within the Māngere/Favona community. While primarily linked to the weather events, it was reported that some were evident prior to the flooding and that the nature and extent of these may not be fully known given barriers faced by residents in seeking assistance. Key recovery needs identified included:

- **Health and wellbeing** needs which were linked to the trauma of the event, anxiety about future adverse weather events, stress and fatigue, and unsuitable accommodation arrangements.
- **Housing and accommodation** needs which stem from residents being relocated to other Auckland suburbs, a lack of appropriate housing in Māngere/Favona, and flood-damaged homes. This is resulting in overcrowding, increased financial costs, a loss of familial ties and cultural connections, and negative psychological impacts.
- **Meeting household basic needs** (e.g. paying for rent and petrol) which pose a challenge for some families because of increased financial commitments due to the weather events.
- **Insurance-related issues** which are leading to increased stress for families, increased costs, and delays in rebuilding damaged properties.
- **Infrastructural issues** which are linked to stormwater or drainage systems and a need to protect the health of the stream.
- **Information and support** for residents which is required to address ongoing issues and remove barriers in accessing recovery-related assistance.

Organisations are playing a range of roles in meeting recovery needs, including: **connecting residents** to service and support options and **advocating** on their behalf; providing **material resources** to families still struggling to recover; providing **formal counselling services and general pastoral care**; **preparing residents** for future adverse weather events, and **offering space or events** for the local community to gather and connect.

A range of challenges were identified in undertaking recovery work, including the **time-consuming** nature of the mahi, the **taxing nature of work**, ensuring that **organisations are not overextended**, and **resource constraints**. **Difficulties in engaging the local community** were also reported, due to language barriers, a lack of awareness of what is available amongst residents, and a reluctance to reach out for help.

Key facilitators of effective recovery work include a **community-led approach**, **established and trusted relationships** between stakeholders (including residents and organisations), **a coordinated approach** with organisations working together to address needs, and **outreach activities** such as 'door knocking'.

Longer term concerns regarding local area risks include a lack of community preparedness for adverse weather events, the capacity of infrastructure to withstand future events, the potential negative

impact of housing redevelopments and intensification, and threats to the natural environment. In sustaining recovery within Māngere/Favona, community stakeholders are looking for improved and more frequent communication from Auckland Council, a relational approach with the organisation to deliver services, and increased funding and resourcing for both local providers and residents.

The findings from the needs assessment underscore the value of a coordinated, community-driven strategy that empowers local stakeholders to bridge existing gaps and deliver tailored responses to address the diverse and persistent recovery needs of the Māngere/Favona community.

1. Introduction

Tāmaki Makaurau experienced two severe weather events in early 2023 – flooding on January 27th and Cyclone Gabrielle in mid-February – that caused widespread damage and displaced thousands of Aucklanders. Residents were severely impacted in the immediate aftermath, with many still facing challenges resulting in ongoing needs stemming from one or both of these events.

The Auckland Council-led Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Office was established to coordinate recovery efforts on behalf of central and local government and their partners. Its role includes a social and wellbeing workstream which is responsible for responding to the social needs of residents who continue to be impacted by the flooding and/or cyclone. Community needs assessments were undertaken in three geographic areas¹ – Henderson/Rānui, Mt Roskill/Wesley, and Māngere/Favona – to support the development of local recovery plans. More specifically, the purpose of these was to identify:

- Community-level impacts and the scale and nature of unmet needs as a result of the events
- The recovery needs that community organisations are meeting, and the role that they are playing in this
- The nature of support sought by community organisations in carrying out this work, including the role of the Auckland Recovery Office in meeting recovery needs.

This document presents findings from the Māngere/Favona² needs assessment.

Research approach

The needs assessment comprised 10 semi-structured interviews with representatives of a range of community organisations based and/or working in Māngere/Favona³. They were invited to participate by the Māngere Convener (Zeprina Fale) who also facilitated the interviews⁴. Discussions were undertaken online and around 60 minutes in duration. All were recorded, with permission, and transcribed by a professional transcriber. A thematic analysis of the data was conducted to identify and map out key themes from the interviews. Participants were provided with a \$100 Prezy card to acknowledge their time and contribution to the research.

This report

This document presents findings relating to recovery efforts in Māngere/Favona as a result of the two weather events, but primarily reflects interviewees' focus on the Auckland Anniversary Weekend flooding and the significant impacts this had on the community. It is important to note that reporting does not encompass all community-led recovery work, as not all groups or organisations involved in this participated in the research.

¹ These three areas were selected due to: high levels of socioeconomic deprivation; the high level of impact and disruption as a consequence of the weather events; the likelihood of being impacted by future weather events; and the high number of individuals who registered for temporary accommodation and the Ministry of Social Development Civil Defence payment following the events.

² Findings from the needs assessments conducted in Henderson/Rānui and Mt Roskill/Wesley are reported separately.

³ This includes Māngere West/East/Central, Māngere Bridge, and neighbouring Ōtāhuhu.

⁴ A Dovetail researcher was also present and took a background role at each interview.

2. The community response in Māngere/Favona

This section provides a high-level summary of the impact of the adverse weather events experienced by the Māngere/Favona community, and the subsequent response by local organisations. Findings presented reflect interviewees' focus on the Auckland anniversary weekend flooding.

Impact of January flooding on residents

Similar to other areas in Tāmaki Makaurau, residents in Māngere /Favona were severely impacted by the January flooding. This was primarily due to the deep flooding which occurred across a wide geographical area in the community. As a result, families were forced to leave unsafe and flooded properties, often under frightening conditions. There were also widespread reports of cars and household goods destroyed due to water damage. Residents were subsequently left homeless, struggling to feed their family, and children were unable to attend school.

Alongside damage to property, there were significant psychological impacts for some community members. Stakeholders also highlighted that the impacts of the flooding were compounded by a lack of financial stability within the community, which included many on low incomes who did not have household or car insurance.

Some groups of residents were identified as particularly vulnerable as events unfolded; this included older residents and those with disabilities, who faced additional challenges leaving flooded properties. Meeting the needs of the Muslim community also introduced some challenges with regard to food requirements, and a lack of availability of appropriate accommodation for women:

We needed to have separate sleeping accommodations for men and women and that was a big struggle for families. Some of our women wouldn't come into the centre to sleep, they stayed in their flooded houses. And finding halal food and who's going to make it, and which restaurants were available to make it and bring it in? (Community stakeholder)

The community response

Organisational responses were generally an amplification of services already provided, although some stakeholders introduced new services in response to community demand. For example, one organisation which usually provided financial advice and support was involved in the distribution of household resources to families. Some of the services provided were delivered from organisations' usual base (e.g. their office) whereas others involved outreach work or mobile operations. Some organisations also established a presence at one of the local Civil Defence centres and provided support directly from this location.

Responses incorporated, but were not limited to, the following activities:

- relocating affected residents to temporary accommodation
- provision and distribution of food
- information sharing, including the dissemination of key messages from formal channels to local residents via social media
- connecting people with services and support
- welfare checks with residents, including via door-knocking or phone calls
- coordinating the acquisition, collection, and distribution of donations
- storage and distribution of household goods (e.g. bedding and whiteware)
- clean-up of homes and removal of flood-damaged items

- liaising with central government agencies (e.g. Ministry for Social Development) to coordinate financial and other support for residents
- administrative and logistical support
- set-up and coordination of volunteer networks who assisted with key tasks, such as the distribution of food.

We also started posting lots of things on Facebook for those people who maybe don't go on Auckland Council or don't listen to radio. Communication was important. (Community stakeholder)

We took a lot of calls from families who had worked with us previously who got flooded out coming to us. So we were taking them back down to the evacuation centre and saying 'Okay, who can help this family to follow the process?' (Community stakeholder)

We realised that that those families couldn't even get their cars out, let alone come out of their whare. So what we did was we packed up the van and we put clothes and jackets and all the sort of things that we thought families might initially need and we drove that vehicle down to the worst hit area. And we had about half a dozen workers and we door knocked. (Community stakeholder)

3. Recovery needs in Māngere/Favona

Community stakeholders reported a range of ongoing needs within the Māngere/Favona community related to the weather events; these include issues that have either still not been resolved from the immediate aftermath or have developed since this time.

Stakeholders spoke about some needs remaining hidden due to people not coming forward for assistance. This was attributed to a number of issues, including people feeling overwhelmed with sorting flood-related matters and being focussed on “*keeping their heads above water*”, a sense of shame or shyness in asking for help, and previous negative experiences of accessing support. Older people in particular were seen to be reluctant to reach out for help. In some cases, stakeholders only identified unmet needs in the community when undertaking outreach work.

We only encounter them [hidden needs] when we do [service] ... Because every time we go out, we get a new story and we're like 'My God, why didn't we know this?... There are so many hidden... Even though we've been to almost every street we know of, we haven't touched base with every single one of them. (Community stakeholder)

It was reported that some of the identified needs and ongoing impacts were evident in the community prior to the flooding but were exacerbated by the weather events. This included the housing shortage and poor-quality rentals available in the area, as well as underlying health issues which worsened during the period after the flooding. Some issues were felt to have originated during the COVID-19 pandemic but aggravated by the January flooding, including low levels of school attendance amongst young people and increased family stressors.

There's still a lot of families who haven't taken kids back [to school] and I think the flood was the tipping point from COVID. They've just gone 'I can't be bothered anymore'. So it's been very hard to get kids back into school. (Community stakeholder)

It's the compounding things that just won't go away and this person in particular with the PTSD, unfortunately her hubby has lost his job too. So it was just another layer, but this is what we're seeing with a lot of those families, it is a layer on layer. It's coming off COVID, which they kind of feel like we haven't really fully recovered [from] already – to this. (Community stakeholder)

Overview of key recovery needs

This section presents an overview of the identified needs in the Māngere/Favona community which remain following the two weather events.

Health and wellbeing

The mental health impacts of the January flooding on residents featured strongly in discussions with community stakeholders. These were linked to a range of issues, including:

- The **trauma of the event itself**, with reports that some individuals had been through very distressing experiences (e.g. having to swim through dirty water to exit properties) that had had lasting impacts on their wellbeing. It was also seen to be retriggering of previous trauma, e.g. for refugee families.
- **Anxiety about future adverse weather events**. Interviewees spoke about people feeling very anxious about future events of a similar nature and the risk of flooding, and the potential

repercussions of these. This was often triggered by heavy rain in the community, and evident amongst both adults and children.

- **Stress and fatigue** in addressing the impacts of the events, including settling insurance claims, arranging repairs to properties, and meeting additional financial commitments. The upheaval of having to move home, including to a different area, was also seen to be adding to the emotional strain experienced by families.
- **Accommodation arrangements** put in place after the events have contributed to a deterioration in mental health. This is discussed further below but is linked to overcrowding, families being relocated outside of their local community, and the sometimes-poor condition of properties.

Babies get really scared when they hear rain. People are unsure, people don't want to leave the house. If there's any extreme weather events, people start to freak out. They are not sure – are they going to flood again? (Community stakeholder)

I was at a community meeting where parents were describing the fear that tamariki have when it rains, wanting to be upstairs not downstairs. And so there's a big need around wellbeing. (Community stakeholder)

There are also people having to live in emergency housing or transitional housing for a period before they could move back and that was quite hard as well... Just this general sense of hopelessness really, I don't know if people really understand what that does to people and their spirit. (Community stakeholder)

People and children are living through so many other fears as well... Not only children but adults experience those things because they know what it could mean if their houses were to flood again. How much stress and upheaval and trauma. And people having to address all the other things that they have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Especially families and people that don't have insurance or they don't have the means to just relocate. That's everything they have. (Community stakeholder)

Physical health needs were also identified, with reports that the flooding had exacerbated underlying health issues that families were still contending with.

Housing and accommodation

It was widely reported by community stakeholders that many families in Māngere/Favona had relocated to other Auckland suburbs following the weather events. These included Kāinga Ora residents, homeowners, and private renters. Some had also been placed in temporary or emergency accommodation (e.g., motels). While it was reported that families are starting to move back into the area and more permanent housing as rebuilding has commenced, others remain living in different communities, some a significant distance from Māngere/Favona. Regardless of their current location, a range of housing and accommodation related needs remain, due to the following issues:

- **A loss of familial ties, cultural connections, and other support networks** as a result of families living outside of their usual community. This included people not being able to visit relatives, and loss relating to places where residents would normally gather or purchase familiar food items.
- **Overcrowding** due to families being forced to move in together in properties that are not designed to meet the number of occupants.

- **Increased financial costs** linked to having to travel back to Māngere/Favona to meet family commitments. This included attending health appointments and transporting children to their usual school to maintain a sense of normalcy and minimise disruption to their education.
- **Psychological impacts** of overcrowding, inappropriate emergency or temporary accommodation, and families living areas outside of their usual sources of support, comfort and community. This was also linked to people sleeping in living rooms or garages, and uncertainty regarding the likelihood of properties flooding in the future.

You can imagine the mental health state of people who have had to squash up in one room or a one bedroom [property]. And we're not talking small families, we're talking our Pacific Island families with five or more people. (Community stakeholder)

Their support network is in Māngere, but they were asked to go and live somewhere else in another region, in another suburb, where it's further away from their support. So that was one of the things that our families kind of struggled with as well, all of their doctors, their schools, their neighbours, their family, all in South Auckland and then being asked to go and live in Mt Eden. (Community stakeholder)

She has a kid who needs kidney dialysis every other day. She's got herself into a routine from Māngere to hospital and then having to hike from Mt Eden to Middlemore for the dialysis, no one took that into account. It cost her more. (Community stakeholder)

They live now somewhere in Botany Downs or somewhere which is different [in terms of] cultural makeup. It won't be the shops where they buy their food, it won't be their fresh markets where they buy taro. Taro might not be available in Botany Downs. All those little things are actually making people displaced. (Community stakeholder)

Other housing related issues include ongoing insurance claims, and families not being able to move back to Māngere/Favona due to a lack of affordable and/or appropriately sized housing in the area. There were also reports of renters living in sub-standard, flood damaged homes that have been incompetently repaired, and anti-social behaviour linked to empty properties.

There are some landlords that are just putting a coat of paint over just to pretend that it's all good. But actually it's not, that whole gib board needs to come out and the tenant knows that, but they've got nowhere else to go and live. So they're kind of putting up with it. (Community stakeholder)

Because there have been vacant houses for months, there's looting and that kind of behaviour going on. The Kāinga Ora homes, there's nothing done about them, there's a whole block of them that are just all caged up... I don't know if it's due to the flood, but I've seen a lot more groups of intimidating young men around the place. (Community stakeholder)

Meeting basic household needs

There is evidence that residents are struggling to meet the costs of basic household needs, including housing, food, and petrol. While the impacts of inflation and overall increase in the cost of living in Aotearoa was acknowledged by stakeholders, they reported that some families were facing increased financial commitments due to the weather events. This included costs related to private rentals they have been forced to move into, fuel associated with transporting children to school from a different area, the purchase of uniforms for children attending new schools, and replacing items damaged in

the floods. A drop in income is also contributing to financial constraints. For example, one stakeholder spoke about this in relation to families who had lost earnings during this time because of changes to their housing situation and were still struggling to recover:

Some had little side hustles and their backyards had a little single room, like a beauty [salon], do their eyelashes, that sort of stuff. So there's quite a few families that had side hustles at home and now they've lost that income. (Community stakeholder)

The impacts of this are wide-ranging with reports that young people are leaving school to work, to contribute to family finances, or missing out on extra-curricular activities due to a lack of funds.

There's a couple of stories where the kids are going to be the sole breadwinners because they're intelligent, they're aimed for university. That dream just took a back seat when they had to go 'I need to think about my family first and mum needs help with paying the rent because three quarters of her pay goes to pay the rent'. We've still got the power and we've still got to put the food on the table, and still got to pay for school stuff for the younger siblings who still go to school. So you'll find that the little kids went to school, but the older kids were then thinking about shall I go to work? (Community stakeholder)

Some residents have moved in with other family members to reduce household costs which, in some cases, is adding additional pressures to an already stressful situation. There were also reports of increased debt – including with Work and Income New Zealand or loan companies – amongst Māngere/Favona families struggling to meet household costs.

Insurance

Stakeholders reported that they were playing an advocacy or support role in relation to residents' household insurance claims with many in the community still in the process of settling these. This included both renters and homeowners. The impact of this was wide-ranging, and leading to increased stress for families, as well as delays in rebuilding damaged properties.

Challenges faced by Māngere/Favona residents which were seen to be contributing to the reported claim settlement delays included language barriers, a lack of familiarity with the claims process, and difficulties in finding suppliers to undertake remediation work.

You need to sit with them, their English might be the barrier. People don't know what questions to ask... You're going to have to help them find builders... they're getting asked what kind of wood do you need? They don't know what they need, they just know they've got to have their house fixed. (Community stakeholder)

A lack of evidence or documentation to support claims was highlighted as an issue, with one stakeholder noting that uncertainty regarding rebuild costs was also playing a role:

They're too scared to say yes to \$50,000 because actually their rebuild from the builder is going to be \$100,000. So they're holding off because they don't know... So we still have got a lot of homes that have not started rebuilds yet because they haven't even finalised it with their insurance companies. (Community stakeholder)

A further insurance-related issue included the ongoing impacts for residents of uninsured cars which had been damaged or destroyed during the events. It was reported that many people had been unable to afford car insurance and therefore had to find the funds to purchase replacement vehicles,

with some taking out a loan for this. For those unable to afford a new car, stakeholders indicated that they were facing additional challenges in getting to work and/or transporting their family around.

Infrastructure

While not widely discussed, ongoing needs in relation to infrastructure were mostly linked to stormwater or drainage systems, and a need to protect the health of the stream. This included for example concerns regarding maintenance of an effluent pump station to mitigate the risk of the stream being polluted during future adverse weather events. Other comments included:

I think our water [is a priority] ... I just don't know where to start with water quality. It's a whole of community, it's Council, it's Auckland Transport. We all need to come together to fix those issues, because the streams and stormwater, is what's going to cause the issues. The overpopulation, our infrastructure is not designed to cope with all of this housing. (Community stakeholder)

One stakeholder felt that as one of the “shared resources” in the community, infrastructural issues should be prioritised, with other needs addressed following this:

I think if we can get the infrastructure or the shared resources sorted and maintained in a proper manner, that could go a long way with sorting out things. Then those other social things can get attended to. But the shared resources that we all are affected by and then we use, I think that should be a key focus. A key thing for us is the infrastructure for the stormwater. (Community stakeholder)

Information and support

Community stakeholders emphasised the importance of information and help to support residents' recovery needs, particularly in relation to the issues discussed above. This included, for example, help with insurance claims and accessing funding, support for parents of children traumatised by the flooding, and information in relation to preparation for future events (e.g. ensuring there is non-perishable food in the home). Interviewees also highlighted a need to reassure residents that the community was better prepared for future adverse weather events:

I think there needs to be reassurance for next time that there will be a good plan in place because people are still feeling the anxiousness around weather events. I think if people know there's a good plan in place that might put people at ease a bit more – and feel a bit more okay next time we do have a weather event. [To know] we've got a location, we know the right person to get hold of. (Community stakeholder)

In addressing the perceived shortcomings in communication during the previous weather events, some stakeholders spoke about the importance of channelling accurate information through trusted, local media channels. This includes information on what to do and where to go during such events (e.g. where support will be provided).

Access to information and support was considered particularly important given the barriers that some residents faced in accessing help (e.g. a lack of awareness of support options) and previous difficulties in securing financial or other support. Several interviewees, for example, spoke about challenges in accessing previous flooding-related funding (e.g. Civil Defence payments) with many residents at this time unsure what they were entitled to, finding the process difficult to navigate and/or were unsuccessful in their applications.

A number of them talked about how difficult it was to access grants. So money apparently was available to whānau but the difficulty, and the length of application forms [were barriers]. Surely there would have been a better way to access money without having to go through Council. That was very painful for whānau who were impacted. (Community stakeholder)

4. Role of organisations in supporting recovery needs

This section presents an overview of the work that organisations are undertaking in meeting recovery needs in the Māngere/Favona community.

The research identified a range of roles, which generally included an extension of the usual services being provided by organisations. For example, one stakeholder spoke about their social work team “picking up any flood response work through their normal day-to-day work”. Another reported that they were utilising their mobile service to maintain their recovery work and had recently confirmed the structure of this mahi to ensure that they continued to respond to community needs. As highlighted in the excerpt below, while stakeholders generally did not introduce new services, they adapted their ‘business as usual’ delivery to a recovery focus:

So we didn't change, but what happened is our team stops our normal BAU. We stopped going out to events and helping capacity build other groups... So, our admin swaps to admin and coordinators ... Our funding person will swap... go out and connect, coordinate, bring anybody in that we know is already doing mahi in that space. And then our kaimahi staff fully turn into... a team that gets out there to deliver the kai parcels, or pick up people to take them to the recovery office, things like that. We just completely changed to a recovery team. (Community stakeholder)

Most, but not all, interviewees indicated that there had been a reduction in the level of support or services being delivered in relation to recovery efforts. One stakeholder reported that while their numbers had “over doubled” in one of their services at the beginning of the year, this had dropped off significantly, and another stated that they were currently working with five families. Others were not able to provide an indication of the level of support being provided specifically in relation to recovery work being undertaken.

Role played in recovery efforts

This section provides an overview of the roles undertaken by community stakeholders in meeting the recovery needs of affected residents in Māngere/Favona.

Connector role

A key role involves organisations connecting local residents with relevant services in assisting them to access support. This includes making referrals to other providers, due to the specialist skills or resources held within these organisations. In some cases, staff are providing information about services or entitlements available, or helping families to navigate different pathways and systems.

We are very good at going ‘Actually this group can help you further’. We just try and keep purely as community connectors. What that means is if someone did want support with the insurance side, we would refer them and call who we knew would help them in the insurance side of things. (Community stakeholder)

Advocacy role

Stakeholders spoke about advocating on behalf of residents in relation to addressing ongoing issues or to secure access to financial entitlements. This was sometimes needed because of the complexity of existing systems and/or due to the “low trust model” operating in some providers. As highlighted previously, some had initially assumed an advocacy role to assist residents in navigating challenges

when accessing earlier funding streams. Advocating on behalf of families can involve staff accompanying residents to recovery-related appointments (e.g. with Kāinga Ora).

Meeting basic needs

This involves the distribution of material resources, including the provision of food, to families still struggling to recover. Stakeholders also spoke about providing support related to school-based needs for families; this included supplying school uniforms, bags, and stationery. One organisation was providing transport to ensure that children attended school. Others indicated that they continued to provide general household resources to affected families:

We're still getting people coming into our [service] asking for resources because they were impacted by flooding way back at the beginning of the year. And to think that we are almost at the end of the year, and these families are still struggling to recover. (Community stakeholder)

Counselling and emotional support

Community organisations are offering support or delivering services in relation to residents' ongoing mental health needs. This includes the provision of formal counselling services as well as more general pastoral care for families who are still struggling emotionally because of the weather events. One organisation had developed an intervention for children impacted by the flooding or cyclone, which they were planning to deliver in the new year. Comments included:

You have to do that pastoral care sometimes and just ask them to have patience and talk about all the positive things that have happened. And let them know that the Government's doing their best and that there's a big demand. So all that kōrero happens because we don't actually want their stress levels to keep going up but we need to appease them before we put that phone down. (Community stakeholder)

One interviewee reported that they were ensuring that staff are also well supported emotionally in responding to ongoing recovery needs, due to the sometimes-taxing nature of the work being undertaken:

[We] also ensure that our staff are prepared in themselves to be able to continue to deal with this. Because we knew it was not going to be a one-month stint of support for families, that they are going to continue to hear these stories over a period of time. (Community stakeholder)

Engagement in future planning efforts

Recovery work also incorporates planning and preparation for potential future weather events, with evidence of this being undertaken by some stakeholders in Māngere/Favona. This includes working with local residents to ensure that they are prepared by having a plan and resources in place, alongside general information-sharing and education. This was seen to be particularly important given the devastation of the January and February events, and lack of preparedness evident amongst some in the community.

We never enforce it on anybody, but it is good to have those conversations because the reality is it might happen or might never happen again. But it's more for readiness and preparation. Because I think we saw first-hand a lot of the devastation. I don't really want to see that again. But if we can help a few families prepare well, then that's our contribution I suppose. (Community stakeholder)

Providing space to socialise, gather and connect

There were some (limited) reports in the research of community organisations providing physical spaces or events that offer opportunities for impacted residents to gather and access emotional support. One stakeholder spoke about their workspace as a place that provided a safe space for community members. This was not only utilised for educational purposes or recovery related advocacy work but offered a comfortable, family-like environment for local residents to visit. As evident in the following excerpt, this was believed to be particularly beneficial for those who may lack secure places to visit in the community:

The space not only provides a place for us to advocate for people and teach people these are your rights and entitlements, it's also a safe space for people to just come and be... we treat people like they're family when they come in. We're happy to offer food and hot drink if we have it. It's a safe space essentially for people in the community that are often judged or are too hard for even existing services to support or connect in with. (Community stakeholder)

There was also evidence of street-based events being run to both bring people together and as a platform for providing recovery-related or emergency management education.

We've always going out into our streets, we would love to do that more... We take the barbecue trailer out, have a barbecue on the street... That will be us bringing the community in and actually teaching people the resilience. Fill out the 'What's the plan Stan?'. We can do it all together, let's do it in a street. (Community stakeholder)

Relationships and collaborations

There was widespread evidence of collaborative working across stakeholders in Māngere/Favona, including in relation to recovery-based mahi. This involved organisations making referrals to other providers or partnering to deliver services. There were also reports of discussions regarding who is best placed to deliver a service, and organisations or individuals working together to ensure healthy workloads were maintained. In some cases, organisations were playing an oversight role, and supporting the work of a multiple service providers.

These are the little groups that we umbrella as an entity. So if I can look after them, they will do a lot of work in that area, and it could be the long-term work. So I will invest in them as much as possible. (Community stakeholder)

We work in conjunction with the other providers, and we know our strengths. We say, 'Okay that's a Whānau Ora case so let's refer them over there. That's a ME Services case let's refer them over there because it's dealing with younger children'. We can deal with this because we've got counselling. (Community stakeholder)

One interviewee felt that while a competitive funding environment had negatively impacted previous levels of collaboration, the weather events earlier in the year had led to organisations reconnecting and exploring ways that they could work together again.

Everyone's kind of looking after themselves, is what I've noticed over probably the last five years and so that whole community collaboration in Māngere was lost in terms of who applies for funding and who delivers what. And everyone just kind of went into themselves and said 'Well we'll do this, and we'll apply for this' and not have many conversations out in the community... So I really was grateful for that opportunity to reconnect and say 'Hey

we are Māngere and how do we respond to our community best?’ (Community stakeholder)

Adopting a collaborative approach had meant that organisations were able to coordinate recovery efforts with one stakeholder indicating that this occurred within the first two weeks after the flooding.

A range of relationships with different Auckland Council departments were reported by community stakeholders, including those that had been in place prior to the adverse weather events. Some reported working with the Local Board or Auckland Emergency Management while responding to the flooding; there was also evidence of strong relationships with individual staff members, including Councillors. Some interviewees had participated in a recent Road Map hui led by the Recovery Office, which provided an opportunity to update the community on recovery efforts and a platform for local stakeholders to share their experiences, concerns, and developments in this area of work.

What is working well

Community stakeholders identified a range of factors that were working well in addressing recovery needs in Māngere/Favona, as follows:

- **A community-led approach** involving organisations and individuals who are well-versed in local needs, know how to engage their community, and have established, trusted relationships with residents⁵. This was seen to lead to a more effective and efficient response, both during and after adverse weather events. It was also highlighted that residents were more likely to trust community organisations or individuals that were known to them, rather than local or central government.
- **Established relationships with key stakeholders**, including Council and other service providers in the community, as a means of facilitating a more responsive and coordinated approach. It was reported that many relationships had initially developed or strengthened during the community response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **A coordinated approach** with stakeholders working together to address needs, including the sharing of resources, referrals to other providers, and partnering to deliver services. This also enables stakeholders to draw on each other’s expertise and avoid duplication of effort.
- **Outreach activities**, such as “door knocking” and “street chats”. This was highlighted as an effective approach in identifying hidden needs and accessing more vulnerable residents in Māngere/Favona.

The community knows itself and the people in the community know the people that they trust too. So it's hard to have a centralised authority come in and try and be like “Oh yeah we know what we're doing,” when actually no one knows who they are and they don't know what they're doing. If we wanted to really centre the needs of the community, then it would be better if they just listened to the community actually and resourced them to do the work that they're actually already doing. (Community stakeholder)

There’s not a lot of trust for institutions in the community and so coming from a trusted source is going to land way better with people. It's people they know, it actually just comes back to relationships, existing relationships. If people have an existing relationship with

⁵ Feedback from stakeholders indicate frustration that Council engaged outside service providers who were not known in the community during the response to the flooding earlier in the year.

someone in the community that's already doing this work, then it's likely that they're going to trust them. (Community stakeholder)

We go to network meetings but usually its focussed on other things. But when it's focussed on Māngere recovery, it's like 'okay, we're all at the same level'. And we need to figure out who does what best, and how do we fit in, in the whole service provision. (Community stakeholder)

I think the Māngere communities, because we've had that history of knowing each other, putting all egos aside, you just turn up for Māngere. And I really love that about Māngere, is that if you are based here and you are for this community and the call goes out, you'll turn up... So that's working really, really well and we have good lines of communication and where they're not good, we're okay to talk about that. (Community stakeholder)

Challenges

Interviewees highlighted a range of challenges in undertaking recovery work, as follows:

- The **time-consuming nature** of the mahi, which can limit the extent of support that is able to be provided.
- The **taxing nature of work**, which can take its toll on staff. This included, for example, advocacy work with government agencies such as Work and Income.
- Ensuring that they did not **overextend the organisation**, in terms of working beyond organisational capacity.
- **Resource constraints**, particularly sustainable funding, which has limited the scope of work able to be undertaken; staffing shortages (e.g. a lack of qualified social workers) were also reported.
- **Difficulties in engaging the local community**, who may face barriers in accessing recovery-related support. These include a lack of awareness of what is available, language barriers, and a reluctance to reach out for help. Stakeholders also highlighted that they had lost contact with some residents who had been rehoused outside of the area.

Once the immediate needs were addressed, and the evacuation centres started to close back down, we had to make a decision about being real about what we could do. What was our capacity? And not try and overstretch us. A number of things were going on for the organisation. ... We had to step back and say actually, what can we do outside of our norm? (Community stakeholder)

Everything comes down to funding actually, because if you have sufficient funding you would have the right type of building to operate out of, you'd have at least one vehicle attached to your service where you can use it to run around and pick up families. You'd have flexibility to recruit staff, short or long term. (Community stakeholder)

We're just trying to get that information out to the community and that's been the hardest bit now for us, because everyone's so dissected and spread out now. Before we could just go to Māngere West, but there's nobody living in Māngere West now. So it's really trying to make sure those families that have been kicked out actually have the information. (Community stakeholder)

5. Future needs and priorities

This section provides an overview of community stakeholders' views on the requirements for sustaining recovery within the Māngere/Favona area and Auckland Council's role within this.

Auckland Council Role

Communication and information flows

Feedback from community stakeholders indicated that some were feeling “*in limbo*” due to a lack of information from Council regarding recovery efforts or progress on some issues. They therefore requested better and more frequent information from the organisation to keep them informed. This included clarity on timelines and developments relating to specific projects – e.g. one stakeholder was wanting to be kept up to date on “*solutions for the stream*” – as well as information regarding support options available to local residents. This would enable community organisations to then disseminate important information to members of their community, which was seen to be an important role:

We are just wondering what kind of timeframe we are looking at realistically and getting some clarity around that, and just updates. As a group we want to be the kind of echo of what's actually happening. So we get the info from council and then we just spread it out to everyone 'hey guys, this is where we're at'. (Community stakeholder)

It was also felt that improved communication channels between Council and community organisations would provide a strong foundation during future adverse weather events:

What I would like to see for our community is that we have a good communication channel with Auckland Council [so that] if we do have another emergency it's having the right people that we can connect with. That there's a solid line of communication and trust... [and] the right people to share the information with the community. (Community stakeholder)

One interviewee suggested that an online portal where they could submit questions could provide an effective avenue for maintaining communication between their organisation and the Council. Another suggested utilising social media to disseminate information to the community – e.g. posting a video or photos of navigators alongside information on the times they are available. Other comments highlighted the importance of two-way communication, with requests for Council to consult with the community regarding their ongoing needs and aspirations.

The nature and style of communication was also seen to be important with regard to Council engaging Māngere/Favona residents. Several stakeholders spoke about the lack of trust in Council evident amongst the local population. Face-to-face engagement was seen to be vital in addressing this; it was viewed as more in keeping with the culture of the Māngere/Favona community and effective in showing a more caring side to the organisation.

We are a very face-to-face community. People gather in churches and the markets, cultural groups. It's such an important thing for people to see other people. I know it's not efficient, but our community really needs face-to-face. We have low trust in organisations. (Community stakeholder)

Ever since our Local Board office shut down, after COVID, it really meant that our trust in the Council and Local Board really diminished. People were really frustrated, like we can't

even come and talk to someone, there's no face-to-face. So I think Māngere need to have that local connection to the Council, somewhere that they can go and they can talk to someone. Because a huge thing for our community is trust and like we have really low trust in Council and government. So I think we need to start building that up again, building that trust up. (Community stakeholder)

Relational approach

Some stakeholders spoke about the value of partnering with Auckland Council to maximise recovery efforts. The importance of relationship building during this time was highlighted, both as a means of fostering familiarity, and as a way of Council learning more about the local organisations undertaking important work within the community.

It's how Council works with local providers on an ongoing basis, building that relationship so they know who we are, and they know what our capability is to support them, and the work they've got to do. (Community stakeholder)

One stakeholder discussed a recent event where Council had introduced the Storm Recovery Navigators⁶, and which they felt had communicated the organisation's openness to a relational approach:

I'm just at Auckland Council now, having the mihi with introducing all the Navigators. This relationship – this is what we've missed with COVID. They've opened up their whole doors. (Community stakeholder)

Resourcing community organisations and residents

As noted earlier, community organisations are experiencing funding challenges in the current environment, which is constraining the level of work undertaken. There were requests therefore for Council to provide financial assistance to support their recovery mahi. One organisation for example was looking to develop a website which would play an important role in keeping the local community updated on recovery-related progress and developments. Others spoke about additional resources enabling them to increase their overall level of recovery work. The importance of a streamlined funding process based on a high-trust model was emphasised by one interviewee:

It is about empowering community organisations like us to be able to do what we know needs to be done and that is about providing us with less complications of getting funding in that point in time to be able to do it. And it should be as simple as a discussion based on trust. If you've already got a track record it should be based on trust rather than filling out and applying and saying why you need it and filling out a budget. While you're trying to be in the frontline serving your community, you have to also be in the back filling out a whole bunch of forms. Can we remove that? (Community stakeholder)

In supporting residents during the recovery phase, it was suggested that Council could provide the public with access to activities and services at no cost:

Making things free, like public transport, anything that they can do to make it easier for the community. They don't have to pay, like library, like renting rooms in the community at Auckland Council spaces... Having free spaces set up where people can come and get food,

⁶ See: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/recovery-extreme-weather-disasters/Pages/storm-recovery-navigation-service.aspx>

more free and accessible public services for people in the community. (Community stakeholder)

Infrastructure and planning

A small number of interviewees felt that infrastructure should be one of Auckland Council’s priorities within its recovery work. This included regular maintenance of the stormwater system to mitigate the risk of future flooding. Other “shared resources” such as roads, parks, and water – alongside planning for housing developments – were also highlighted as important considerations within this role. One interviewee felt that a review of current Council policy regarding housing developments should be viewed as part of the organisation’s recovery remit:

When you think about the Fletcher families, maybe there’s a review that the Council could do around how those houses were planned and developed, and were there any decisions that they could have made that may have prevented the extent of the damage that happened down there? (Community stakeholder)

Updates regarding infrastructure developments and upgrades were sought as a means of keep the community informed; this included anticipated timelines and key milestones for both ongoing and future work.

When considering Auckland Council’s recovery role, stakeholders also focussed on preparation for future events. This included, for example, storage of equipment that can be accessed in response efforts, training and network meetings that support community readiness, and ensuring that the Local Board are well resourced for future emergencies.

Longer-term concerns regarding local area risks

Longer term concerns expressed by interviewees when considering local area risks are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Long term concerns

Concern	Description	Comment
Community preparedness for future weather events	This included risks related to a lack of preparedness amongst residents, service providers and Auckland Council. Interviewees spoke of residents needing to know how to access resources during adverse events and a requirement for Council to have effective working relationships with both local service providers and internal stakeholders, to mitigate these risks.	<i>“It’s how Council works with local providers on an ongoing basis, building that relationship so they know who we are, and they know what our capability is to support them, and the work they’ve got to do. I think is a big thing”.</i>
Infrastructure capacity	Stakeholders expressed concerns about the capacity of infrastructure to withstand future adverse events, particularly in areas which were shown to be vulnerable to flooding.	<i>“I have definitely got concerns for Māngere West still and part of Māngere East ... and their homes are going to be flooded again and again, until the infrastructure [is ready] which we got told won’t be happening within at least another ten years”.</i>

<p>Redevelopment and intensification</p>	<p>This includes concerns regarding the quality, density, and location of future housing developments, and their impact on infrastructure. It incorporated fears regarding the potential for flooding within new developments, particularly those being built on perceived “flood plains”.</p>	<p><i>“I think it’s the development around our community. That’s what scares people the most – the quality of development, the quantity of housing that’s coming into the area and our stormwater capacity”.</i></p>
<p>Natural environment</p>	<p>Stakeholders highlighted issues linked to water quality, the health of the stream, and the potential for pollution either as a result of future housing developments or adverse weather events. A need to understand how the stream can be “controlled” and ensuring that residents are aware of the importance of this, to safeguard both the environment and homes from future events was also highlighted.</p>	<p><i>“It’s the quality of the water that’s flowing through there [the stream] too. We’ve got these developments that we’re not sure what standards they are going by necessarily. Some of them are private and so they might be dumping their stuff in there. And then there’s the effluent pump station on Hinau Road and when that flood came, that was overflowing, so we had raw sewerage pumping into that stream”.</i></p>

6. Conclusion

This needs assessment has identified a range of ongoing issues faced by the Māngere/Favona community linked to the adverse weather events earlier this year. These are not insignificant and, based on stakeholder reports, there remain many families struggling to recover across a range of domains. The ongoing impact of the flooding on children and young people was emphasised in the research and should be a focus for future support and recovery efforts.

It is important to acknowledge that the nature and extent of needs may not be known currently, given evidence that some in the community are reluctant – or face barriers – to seek help. This suggests a role for ongoing monitoring of the needs of the Māngere/Favona community, and adoption of regular outreach activities to establish or maintain connections with more vulnerable or isolated families.

It is apparent there is a strong community network in operation within Māngere/Favona, as evident in the established and trusted relationships between organisations, and examples of partnering to deliver services. This provides a strong and robust foundation for current and future recovery work, and efforts should be made to further support and nurture this. The recent launch of community funding by the Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Office has the potential to help overcome existing resource constraints and assist organisations to build capacity and capability in responding to recovery needs.

Stakeholders have expressed their willingness to work with Council in meeting recovery needs. However, the importance of a relational and partnership approach is very clear. Of note, efforts must be community-led – drawing on the skills, expertise, knowledge, relationships, and reputation of existing stakeholders who are known and trusted by local residents and best placed to deliver recovery-related support. Working with local service providers will play an important role in overcoming the distrust of local and central government held by some in the community, and facilitate a more effective and coordinated response.

Streamlined and coordinated Council processes and systems that are easy to navigate will be essential in meeting families' recovery needs and building trust with communities in the long-term. Easy access to information – from support entitlements to hazard identification and preparedness - will also play an important role in this regard.

The findings from this needs assessment underscore the value of a coordinated, community-driven strategy that empowers local stakeholders to bridge existing gaps and deliver tailored responses to address the diverse and persistent recovery needs of the Māngere/Favona community.