

19 August 2020

Rangi Faith

By email: fyi-request-13447-025dfe17@requests.fyi.org.nz

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Dear Rangi

**Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):
Request for Information**

I refer to your email of 3 August 2020 requesting information on tree felling in Rangiora. Your request has been referred to me to reply.

The poplar trees in the vicinity of Cones Road, Rangiora, were located between the primary and secondary stopbanks. The last major flood to break through this area was in 1953. The secondary stopbanks were installed between 2013 and 2018 and are critical pieces of infrastructure for protecting people and property. In the event of a breach of the primary stopbank, the flood flow is channelled back into the river by the secondary bank.

The problem with the trees which were there was that they slowed the water down and restricted its passage through this critical zone back into the river downstream of the rail bridge. Modelling of flood flows through this area indicated that with the trees in place, overflows into Rangiora were likely. This is a risk we are unwilling to accept. As well, many of the trees were in very poor health and were rotten in the middle, making them unstable and a hazard to park users.

Tracks in the park will be re-established once the clearing is finished. These will now traverse an open grassed area, rather than a forested area with all debris and stumps removed. The final condition will be a mown grass park with the exercise stations and trails re-established. While it may not be as attractive for cycling and running dogs as it was, an open greenspace allows other uses for community recreation.

The Ashley Rakahuri River is a braided river with significant biodiversity values. Environment Canterbury prioritises braided river ecosystems and is currently working on a plan for the river to enhance mahinga kai, biodiversity and recreation values while still allowing for the protection of the community from flooding.

We are actively addressing ways we can raise community awareness and the reasons for these types of works in the future to ensure better community understanding.

You will be aware that if you are not satisfied with this response you are able to refer this matter to the Office of the Ombudsman under s27(3) of the LGOIMA.

Please be advised that we now put LGOIMA responses that are in the public interest onto our website. No personal details of the requester are given, but we do summarise the essence of the request alongside the response.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Lillian Sewell in the first instance (lillian.sewell@ecan.govt.nz or 033677340).

Yours sincerely,



Nadeine Dommissé
Chief Operating Officer