

---

Resilient Westport

Media Release

For release 10am on 18 December 2024

### **Ceremony to mark the breaking of ground for Westport stopbank**

A ceremony was held today to officially mark the start of work on the McKenna stopbank, which is part of Resilient Westport's programme of work to help protect Westport from flooding.

The McKenna stopbank is a 780-metre section of flood defence. It forms part of the project's Upper Orowaiti area of flood protection. The stopbank, on private farmland, will be about 2.2 metres high and around 18 metres wide at the base, depending on the ground contours.

Work got underway recently, but the official ground breaking ceremony was deferred following the passing of West Coast Regional Councillor Frank Dooley.

Today West Coast Regional Council (WCRC) Chair Peter Haddock was joined by Councillor Mark McIntyre to turn over the first ceremonial sod.

"It was bittersweet being here without Frank who passed so suddenly recently. He was a great advocate for Buller and the wider West Coast community. He would have enjoyed seeing this tangible piece of progress, which will have real benefits for the Westport community as part of the overall flood protection scheme," says Mr Haddock.

The work will be carried out in 150-metre-long sections. First the whole 780 metre footprint of the stopbank is dug out – clearing and storing the topsoil, which goes back on at the end of the work and is replanted with grass seed. Then gravel is laid down and compacted, layer by layer, in each section. Approximately 30,000 tonnes of locally-sourced gravel will be used during the process.

The McKenna stopbank is scheduled to be complete in March-April, depending on weather conditions.

[ends]

#### **For further information please contact:**

Resilient Westport Communications team

[media@resilientwestport.co.nz](mailto:media@resilientwestport.co.nz)

Note, a fact sheet is attached with more information on the construction process.