
McKenna stopbank Fact Sheet - 18 December 2024

The McKenna stopbank is an earthen stopbank with an initial length of 780m, to help prevent overflow from the Orowaiti River.

This is the first of the larger stopbanks to get underway. It forms parts of the Upper Orowaiti stopbank.

The work will be carried out in 150-metre-long sections. First the whole footprint of the stopbank is dug out (see images supplied). This involves clearing the topsoil, any rocks and grass. The topsoil goes back on in the end and the stopbank re-grassed.

Fast facts:

- The process starts with stripping the top layer of grass, soil and rocks along the footprint of the full 780 metres long stopbank.
- The stopbank will be around 18 metres wide at the base and around 2.2 metres high.
- The topsoil will be set aside during construction and replaced onto the completed stopbank which will also be re-grassed.
- There will be a base layer of gravel which is smoothed out and compacted using machinery.
- The stopbank will be built using this practice - layer by layer.
- Gravel is being sourced from the McPaddens pit which is just out of Westport.
- That supports local and reduces transport costs – around 8 kilometres away.
- Approx. 30,000 tonnes of gravel will be needed.
- The work is expected to be complete by March/April 2025 – weather dependent.

Staff and equipment

There will generally be fewer than 10 people on the worksite at any time. There will be truck movements, bringing in the gravel for the banks.

Site prep is underway – this includes setting up facilities for staff, material lay-down areas and so on.



Work began in late November to dig out the base layer of the 780-metre long stopbank. After that, it is built using layer by layer of compacted gravel in 150-metre sections.

