

Letter to residents of Vista and Levin Groves, Kelson, from HCC Chief Executive, Tony Stallinger, 19 October 2007

I am writing to update you directly on developments for restoring the August 2006 slip between Vista and Levin Groves.

You will recall that the overwhelming opinion at the public meeting on 9 August this year was to restore the slip according to the plan presented to the meeting. This is the Council's preference as well.

The first stage in achieving this was to gain approval from the directly affected residents for a resource consent.

Unfortunately we were unable to secure this approval from all of the parties. While this would not have been fatal to the project, because we believe we could have achieved a resource consent through hearings, the time taken for these hearings would have prevented us from starting and completing the work before the onset of next winter. We are advised that working on this project during the winter is dangerous.

We likewise have been unsuccessful in our requests for all those who received EQC or insurance payouts to return these payouts into the project. As we have always made clear, Council is unable to meet all the project costs by itself while compensation money that has been paid to residents has not been made available for this purpose as well.

The further development is that the owner of 7 Levin Grove, Mr Graham Cassells, has purchased 6 Vista Grove.

Given Mr Cassells' clear disinclination to cooperate on the restoration of the slip, the result of this purchase is that prospects for a partial restoration, on just the Vista Grove side, have disappeared. In engineering terms this option was already highly problematic.

We approached Mr Cassells to see if he would consider selling his now two properties to Council in order that the full restoration work could be accomplished. Mr Cassells rejected this approach.

Council must now consider its other options. We have conducted some preliminary investigation work on a permanent securing of our sewer pipeline that runs between 7 Levin Grove and 6 Vista Grove.

The preferred preliminary option is for a suspended cable pipe bridge, similar to the temporary structure which is there at the moment.

A full restoration appears unlikely. However Council will continue to investigate its remaining options with consideration for the interests of affected residents.