

# Has the social license negotiated within peri-urban environments been impacted following Cyclone Gabrielle?

By Hannah Gully - Report submitted to Massey University

Hannah's report examined a case study of disaster response in Te Awa, a suburb south of Napier in Hawke's Bay. During Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023, the suburb flooded resulting in the evacuation of 8000 citizens. The report aims to explore the implications of the cyclone and disaster response for social licence of farming in the region. Although Te Awa is a peri-urban suburb, the local catchment supports a lot of horticultural farming as well. Hannah's research question was:

*Has the social licence negotiated within peri-urban environments been impact following Cyclone Gabrielle?*

Hannah's report is written from the perspective of a practicing planner who lives and works in Hawke's Bay. She notes the important role of planners in facilitating relationships and navigating complexities between industries, community, and local government. Hannah analysed data using qualitative discourse analysis techniques. Hannah chose not to conduct interviews as the research was completed in the aftermath of the cyclone, and it was decided that it would be too challenging for stakeholders to be interviewed at that time. Various form of qualitative data like media and public submissions were analysed in the report.

In noting the media's response to the disaster, Hannah argued that the issue of climate change and responsiveness to future events was a major theme. Increased risk of flooding means some land uses that were previously suitable for Te Awa may no longer be suitable in the future. Despite this, according to the author there was little discussion of alternative land uses or options to 'build back better' from the disaster.

After analysing policy documents, Hannah argued that tensions between National Policy Statements for Urban Development and Highly Productive Land pushed the regional council into mutually unachievable positions.

In concluding, Hannah noted that social licence operates at different scales and that moments of crises – like Cyclone Gabrielle – can trigger different conversations at different scales. Furthermore, she notes the importance of media in shaping narratives around disaster recovery, as well as the importance of public engagement and the need for reactive governance.