

# Precautionary analysis on erosion risk

By JOEL MAXWELL

The author of a coastal erosion report that left property owners fearing a \$200 million price slump fronted to the community on Thursday.

Roger Shand gave a presentation on his coastal erosion hazard report, which outlines erosion risks included in the LIMs of 1800 beachfront properties.

At the Kapiti Coast District Council meeting he defended the peer review of the report released in August.

Councillor K Gurunathan asked whether the report would have benefited from an independent peer review, given some \$200 million was wiped off property values – a question submitted by a community member.

Dr Shand said no.

"I would challenge that and say 'where did that information come from?', to start with. I've already gone through the peer review issue and I think the questioner should really put some more information out there [about the claimed drop in property values]."

Dr Shand explained that peer review for his work is not the same as that expected for academic publication.

"We chose reviewers, to some extent, based on people I thought were competent. People who had a background in this area... basically the ones who are available, it's not easy to get them. They're busy people."

During the presentation Dr Shand said the findings in the report were gained from a "precautionary" method.

"What we're looking at is that this is something that could happen, it does not mean it will happen." Future methods for reports could give probabilities of erosion but his did not, he said.

Dr Shand said the report was done at a local level – which meant information was gathered along the 30

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Coastal erosion report author Roger Shand

kilometres of coastline at 1km to 3km intervals.

Senior council manager Gael Ferguson said people who did not agree with the hazard lines near their property could have the information changed in the LIM. But they would need to engage an expert to prove it.

"If you do engage a coastal scientist to look at your particular property relative to the lines that are there, then that scientist will then engage with Dr Shand or our technical expert and come to some conclusion about that."

She said if there was agreement between experts that information would be placed on the LIMs and "potentially" the hazard lines adjusted, this could be done at any time.

However Dr Shand again warned that genuine experts on Kapiti's coast and coastal policy technical requirements were rare.

"There are very few scientists around who can do that. Universities aren't putting a lot out and there's going to be a shortfall and it's not going to be that easy to do... I will know them all [New Zealand's experts], and I will know if I've got confidence in them very quickly."

People could possibly contact the council and they could ask him for advice on experts, he said.

In August the council went public with the report, which found 1000 beachfront properties were at risk from erosion within 50 years – another 800 within a century.

The council was obliged by government policy to undertake the assessment, and forced by legislation to include it in LIMs. The information was included in LIMs the same day it was announced to media.