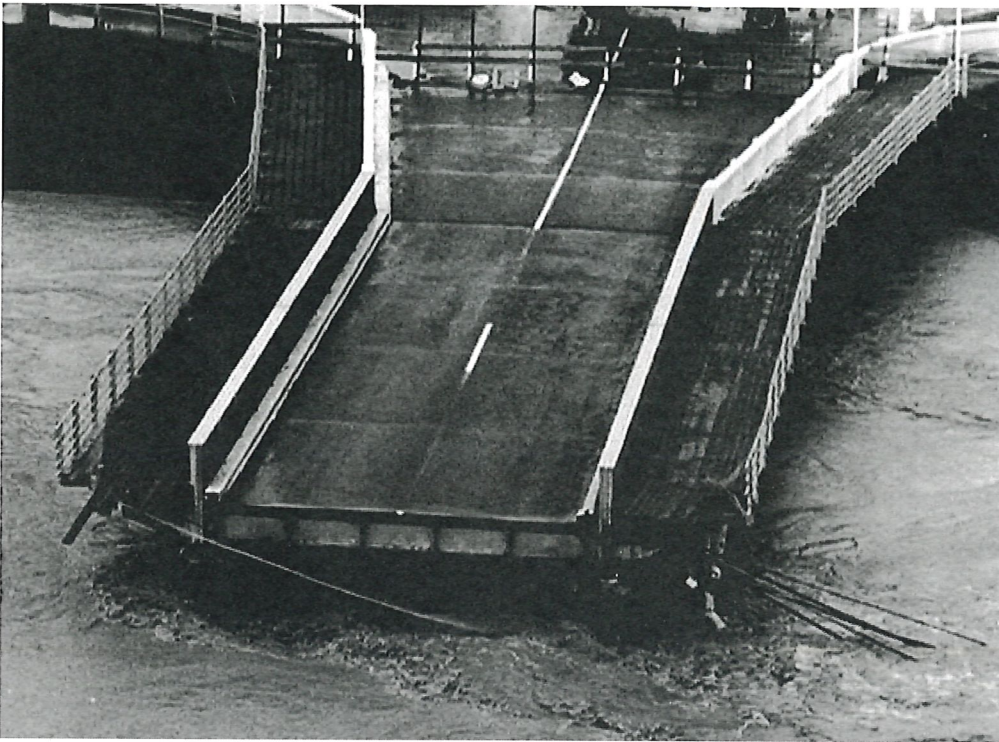


Cyclone Bola strikes

7 March 1988

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Cyclone Bola, one of the most damaging storms to hit New Zealand, struck Hawke's Bay and Gisborne–East Cape in March 1988. The weather system slowed as it moved over the area, bringing torrential rain for more than three days.

Worst affected was the hill country behind Gisborne, where warm moist air increased rainfall. In places, more than 900 mm of rain fell in 72 hours, and one area had 514 mm in a single day – more rain than parts of Central Otago get in an average year.

Ensuing floods overwhelmed river stopbanks, damaged houses, swept away bridges and sections of roads and railway lines, and destroyed parts of Gisborne's main water pipeline. Three people died in a car swept away by floodwaters, and thousands were evacuated from their homes.

Horticulture and farming losses amounted to \$90 million (equivalent to \$170 million today). Farmers lost large tracts of grazing area, and thick sediment from the ebbing floods smothered pastures, orchards and crops. The government repair bill for the cyclone was more than \$111 million (\$210 million).

Read more on NZHistory

New Zealand disasters timeline – New Zealand disasters timeline
1988 - key events – The 1980s

External links

Southland Floods and Cyclone Bola (Te Ara)

Cyclone Bola film (Te Ara)

Cyclone Bola (Chch City Libraries)

Cyclone Bola 1988 (Napier City Council)

Updated 7 December 2016

