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## Nelson City Council faces \$60m bill for flood repairs, govt must help - mayor

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Days Track closed after floods in 2011 and was not reopened until 2017. It was closed again after slips during the August 2022 flooding. Photo: RNZ/ Samantha Gee

P Nelson is facing years of recovery and the council faces an infrastructure repair bill up to \$60 million after August's floods.

Mayor Nick Smith said it was the largest repair bill for a natural disaster the city had faced since the 2011 flooding, which had cost \$15m.

P The \$40 to \$60m estimate includes the cost to repair roads and infrastructure, walkways and cycleways and to restore parks and reserves.

That figure was on top of \$6m already spent on the emergency response by Nelson City Council, Smith said.

The cost to private property has also been steep, and many Nelson homeowners are still awaiting assessments (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/477051/nelson-flooding-lengthy-wait-for-repair-work-takes-toll-on-homeowners>) of damage to their houses, before they can even begin repairs.

Smith and elected members took a bus tour of Nelson on Thursday to look at some of the city's worst affected

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Smith's reaction when he learnt of the estimated recovery bill was "a big gulp", he said.

"These are very big numbers, they are really going to put pressure on the council.

"But it's not just about the financial stress, councillors are also concerned about the social stress on families and obviously there's the issue of the infrastructure resilience."



Nelson mayor Nick Smith (right) with City Council infrastructure manager Alec Louverdis (second right) and councillors during a tour of damage from the August floods. Photo: RNZ/ Samantha Gee

Smith called on the government for support, and said the scale of the costs was beyond what Nelson ratepayers could afford.

"We have appreciated the financial support for the emergency response and Mayoral Relief Fund, but will be looking for further assistance for this massive recovery bill."

The mayor is scheduled to discuss repairs and the cost with Minister for Emergency Management Kieran McNulty next Thursday, during a visit to Nelson by the minister.

One of the main infrastructure priorities was re-instating the raw water pipeline from the Maitai Dam that was damaged during the floods.

Council infrastructure manager Alec Louverdis said the city was relying on a back-up pipeline to supply water to Nelson residents until the main pipe could be fixed.

Grenville Terrace in Nelson where many houses remain red or yellow stickered. Photo: RNZ/ Samantha Gee

"If something happened to that duplicate pipeline tomorrow, without that raw water pipe being able to operate we would have a problem. So it's critical," Louverdis said.

"We are well on track to having that completed within the next three weeks."

Louverdis said the last two months and the recovery period had been tumultuous, with a lack of sleep and constant decision-making.

"No sooner do we exit the response and we're back into the recovery and what we're trying to do is we try to put ourselves in the residents' shoes. As tired as we are, as exhausted and demoralised [as] some of them are ... we need to be able to work closely with them."