
Climate Change Challenges: Relocating from at-risk Areas

On Tuesday 28 November, Greenwood Roche hosted our first climate change focussed panel event: 'Relocating from At-Risk Areas', which centred around planned relocation. We are grateful to the panellists for taking time out to bring their expertise to the event and to all audience members for their thoughts and questions.

Our article gives an insight into some of the important conversations that were covered on the night. Keep an eye out for more events in the future!

Our very own John Greenwood opened the evening with a summary of the Report of the Expert Working Group on Managed Retreat – A Proposed System for Te Hekenga Rauora/Planned Relocation and its recommendations, before our panel opened its discussion. The evening closed with an informal Q & A session, where audience members had the opportunity to weigh in and quiz our panel members.

Over the course of the evening, a diverse range perspectives and concerns were aired and the discussion was educational and thought-provoking. Key discussion points included:

- the 'game of chicken' between banks, insurers and Government, where no one wants to be the one to tell people they can't live in their homes any more. As a result of this, at-risk communities aren't even aware of the scale of risk.
- the need to consult with communities. Firstly, if a planned relocation system relies on using legislative powers as a primary tool to relocate communities then 'the battle is already lost'. Secondly, New Zealanders have deep connections to the whenua, and should only be made to leave if it is essential. Thirdly, it is crucial that a Tiriti-based approach to planned relocation is taken.
- How do we plan for the scale of relocation required? Researchers have estimated that over 282,000 houses, with an estimated replacement value of over \$213 billion, are in flood hazard areas across Aotearoa New Zealand. Further, around 80% of the marae in the country are located on or near the coast or near flood-prone rivers.
- the limited current powers of local authorities in this area. For example, local authorities can approve the building or strengthening of seawalls, but are not empowered in relation to many other mitigation or adaptation activities, so naturally, people lobby for building or strengthening seawalls, irrespective of how effective it will be.

We look forward to continuing the conversation going forward and hosting more events of this type as part of our commitment to improving broader outcomes under our new [GreenPrint](#) initiative.

Finally, a special thank you to all our panellists: Rawiri Faulkner (Environment and Culture at Ngāti

Toa), Alison Howard (Manager for Climate Change Response at Wellington City Council), and Peter Nunns (Director of Economics at Te Waihanga / the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission).
