

Flooding Us

P.O. Box 48-070
Silverstream
Upper Hutt 5142

To Wellington Water Board, Wellington Water Committee, CE & COO

Subject: Request for Inclusion of Pinehaven Stream Catchment in the Upper Hutt Flood Hazard Modelling Consultation and for Extension of the Consultation Period

To:

- **Wellington Water Board Chair – Nick Leggett**
- **Wellington Water Committee Chair – Cr Ros Connelly**
- **Chief Executive – Pat Dougherty**
- **Chief Operating Officer – Charles Barker**

Wellington Water Limited

From:

Flooding Us – A Community-Led, Evidence-Based Initiative

Date: 04 December 2025

Executive Summary

We respectfully request that Wellington Water Limited (WWL):

1. **Support the immediate inclusion of the Pinehaven and Silverstream flood maps in the current Upper Hutt Flood Hazard Modelling Consultation, and**
2. **Support an extension of the consultation beyond 12 December 2025, to ensure the process is robust, transparent, and informed by complete and accurate information.**

Pinehaven Stream catchment is the only sub-catchment in Upper Hutt with a 15-year-old model known to contain serious technical flaws, yet it has been excluded from a consultation promoted as providing “Upper Hutt flood maps”. Given WWL’s responsibilities for stormwater modelling, infrastructure planning, and catchment management, this exclusion undermines the credibility of the overall consultation and has direct implications for network resilience and downstream public safety.

We are simultaneously writing to UHCC and GWRC leadership about the same concerns, as coordinated leadership across all three agencies is essential.

For transparency and consistency, we will be publishing these letters on our website.

Key Concerns

1. The AWA stormwater models are being finalised without consideration of the Pinehaven catchment

The suburban stormwater models prepared for northern, central, and southern Upper Hutt exclude Pinehaven and Silverstream. This produces an artificial “hole” in the district-wide stormwater hazard picture.

Given Pinehaven’s well-known history of model inaccuracies, and its role as a major flow path through Silverstream, excluding it creates an incomplete view of flood risk for both communities and for the city as a whole.

2. The AWA models were not calibrated, only lightly validated using anecdotal observations

The three Model Build Reports state that the models were validated by comparing model outputs to small numbers of anecdotal resident reports such as:

- “flooding from blocked drain”,
- “flooding heading up driveway”,
- “flooding from Gemstone Drive coming down Beryl Grove”.

These are valid supporting observations, but they do **not** constitute calibration, nor do they represent systematic validation.

The consequence is that a large part of the city now has stormwater maps produced without calibration, while the Pinehaven maps (with known flaws) are excluded entirely.

This fragmented approach does not provide the community or Councillors with the integrated understanding of urban flood risk that WWL normally strives to deliver.

3. Excluding Pinehaven undermines stormwater network planning and hydraulic neutrality assessments

WWL is responsible for ensuring stormwater networks can accommodate flows from both current and future development.

The Pinehaven model currently in use:

- significantly overestimates baseline flows,
- was calibrated to an unverified and unrealistically low modelled water level for the 2009 flood,
- embeds rainfall-loss assumptions that treat forested hills as an already-urbanised surface,
- overstates the 25-year flow at the gauge location by almost double when compared to independent assessments.

These errors impact:

- stormwater network capacity planning,
- assessments of development impacts,

- the ability to set defensible stormwater neutrality benchmarks,
- cost allocation (public versus developer), and
- the design of downstream upgrades.

Given that WWL is responsible for advising on development impacts and three-waters planning across Upper Hutt, the continued use of this flawed model exposes WWL to unnecessary risk.

4. Public consultation on “Upper Hutt flood maps” is incomplete and inconsistent without Pinehaven

Residents were specifically invited to provide feedback on whether the maps “match lived experience”.

Yet Pinehaven and Silverstream residents have no maps to review.

This undermines trust in the process and prevents meaningful public participation on one of the most flood-affected catchments in Upper Hutt.

5. The consultation timing limits Councillor engagement

The consultation opened just weeks after the local body elections. New Councillors have not yet been briefed, and are therefore unable to properly engage with constituents or the technical content.

Given that stormwater modelling is complex and influential in future investment decisions, this reinforces the need for an extension.

Requested Actions

We respectfully request that Wellington Water:

1. **Support the inclusion of the Pinehaven Stream catchment flood maps in the current consultation**, so that Upper Hutt residents receive a complete and coherent understanding of flood risk across the city.
2. **Support extending the consultation period beyond 12 December 2025** to allow the public and elected members to engage meaningfully with the modelling information.
3. **Advocate clarity on decision-making responsibility** by confirming publicly which agency (GWRC, WWL, UHCC, or jointly) decided to exclude Pinehaven from the consultation.
4. **Publish the model build reports in full** on the consultation platform so the public has access to the technical basis of the maps.

Conclusion

WWL plays a central role in ensuring that stormwater modelling, infrastructure planning, and public consultation processes are technically robust and reflect real-world catchment conditions.

The exclusion of Pinehaven Stream catchment from this consultation risks undermining the credibility of the wider flood mapping exercise, and it prevents residents from providing feedback on the most disputed and technically flawed model in Upper Hutt.

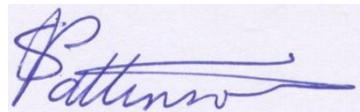
We ask WWL to support the inclusion of Pinehaven and Silverstream in the consultation, and to support an extension to ensure a complete, transparent, and technically sound process.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with WWL representatives to discuss this matter further.

Kind regards,

Flooding Us

A community-led, evidence-based initiative

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "AP Patterson".

Director
Flooding Us NZ Limited