

# Wanganui Chronicle

TUESDAY JANUARY 14 1997

---

## Trench cut to release Turakina floodwater

**Engineers have cut a trench to release water trapped by a large sandbar at the mouth of the Turakina River, but the success of the work will depend largely on Mother Nature.**

Sea water washing over the sandbar and river water unable to escape resulted in an estimated 3km area being flooded, affecting houses, playgrounds and a camping ground at the beach settlement at the weekend.

People in the area spent seven fruitless hours on Sunday attempting to dig a channel through the bar, but quickly realised the effort had been futile.

The Rangitikei District Council called in roading engineer Alan Geerkens yesterday in an attempt to release the trapped water.

Mr Geerkens said a digger was brought in to cut a channel through the sandbar opposite the settlement and that, combined with a channel nature had opened up a few kilometres south, would hopefully ease the situation.

"Water has been released through a channel further down the beach and that, combined with the channel cut by the digger, will help drain the water," Mr Geerkens said.

"However, we'll be at the mercy of Mother Nature. The weather is meant to be settling down, so hopefully we won't have the onshore winds of the past few weeks - that should help ease the pressure."

Civil Defence spokesman for the area Bruce Attwell said the ponded water had not been life-threatening, nor had it threatened houses - it had just been annoying.

No-one talked to yesterday could explain why the sandbar had formed, although Mr Geerkens speculated that the strong on-shore winds experienced in recent weeks may have been a factor.

"Not being a coastal engineer I'm at a loss to fully explain why this has happened, but I'd suggest the on-shore wind may have had an impact," he said.

Wanganui Aero Work helicopter pilot Charlie Anderson, who took Chronicle photographer Brendon O'Hagan aloft yesterday to take pictures, said he had watched the sandbar grow significantly over the past six weeks.

"I measured its length about six weeks ago using GPS equipment and from memory it was about 2.4km. When we measured it today it had grown by several hundred metres," Mr Anderson said.



**Water trapped by a large sandbar has caused minor headaches for Turakina Beach residents over the past few days. Relief was at hand after engineers cut a channel through the sandbar using a digger yesterday, allowing water to drain back to the sea.**