

Writing prompt: Climate Resilience

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Coastal erosion is a problem that the Hibiscus Coast is facing. The beautiful white-sand beaches are slowly disappearing as the sea levels rise creating a safety hazard for the nearby community. According to the 2023 Census around 34.6% of Orewa's population is aged 65 and over; erosion along the coastline could create an unsafe environment for the older residents. This is why the Auckland Council has recognised the issue and started the Orewa Seawall project. The Orewa Seawall is a 600m seawall, between Marine View and Kohu Street, designed to help prevent erosion along the beach. Orewa is currently one of Auckland's highest at-risk coastal areas and is a top-priority area for erosion management. The seawall will make where the beach and land meet a safer place for the community. The project is planned to finish before the end of 2025.

Climate change is one of several environmental challenges that affect the HBC. Due to rising sea levels, storm surges and rainfall changes leading to the previously mentioned coastal erosion. These changes threaten not only the marine ecosystem but also the residents of low-lying areas. In January of 2023, Auckland experienced major flooding that started the Friday before Auckland's Anniversary Weekend and continued throughout the weekend. The floods impacted 25 suburbs in the city, closed major motorways and left 6000-8000 homes requiring damage assessments. On January 28th, a landslide in Tauranga destroyed a house. Over the span of two days, Auckland's emergency services responded to 2,242 emergency calls, 719 weather incidents and carried out 126 rescues. Soon after, Cyclone Gabrielle struck in early February. This cyclone was the worst Auckland had faced since Cyclone Giselle in 1968, in which the aftermath impacted Auckland harshly, highlighting the city's vulnerability to extreme weather events.