

**TARARUA DISTRICT**  
**CYCLONE GABRIELLE**  
**RECOVERY PROGRAMME** 



**CYCLONE  
GABRIELLE  
IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT  
SURVEY  
REPORT**

June 2023

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# Executive Summary

Thank you to everyone who filled in the Tararua District Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery Programme Impact Assessment Survey. We appreciate the time you took to help us understand the impact on you, your family, and your property.

The Tararua District Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery Programme distributed an Impact Assessment Survey via SurveyMonkey, which was circulated to the community on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2023, and closed on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. The survey was advertised on the Tararua District Council website and Facebook pages, in the Bush Telegraph, via posters and flyers, and sent to stakeholders and community groups to distribute.

The reason for this survey was to understand the impacts throughout the district from Cyclone Gabrielle, and what our biggest needs are. The results from this survey will help us to plan recovery support going forward.

The results are evidence that the impacts and needs throughout the Tararua District are significant. We wanted to hear from a wide range of people so we could capture as much information as possible. To do this, we collected information from the following groups:

- Farmer/grower/lifestyle block owner
- Business owner/manager
- Resident of Tararua/other

It is clear that farmers/growers/lifestyle block owners throughout the district have been heavily impacted. Major damage includes slips, silt, and debris, fencing damage, culvert and bridge damage, farm track damage and stock loss and animal health issues.

Approximately \$7,806,400 total of farm damage has been reported by 66 respondents. This figure is likely to be higher as some farmers are yet to estimate the monetary value of damage on farm.

Some businesses in the area have been hit hard by Cyclone Gabrielle, also with a lot of medium-long term risks being assessed as loss of production and income. Some businesses and farms are experiencing local workforce employee shortages, with a handful willing to employ local unskilled apprentices or youth.

It is evident that mental health and wellbeing have taken a hit since the cyclone, with stress being reported as a major concern amongst those impacted. This is in part due to property/farm damage, financial issues, and lack of insurance, overworking and longer travel routes due to road closures.

Short and medium term needs included financial assistance, practical help, and business support and advice. Longer term focus areas included roading and bridge repairs, river management, climate change resilience and continuity of telecommunications.

People also had the chance to tell us what they appreciated about the Tararua community during response and recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle.

# Objectives and Approach

## The objectives for this work

To understand the impacts throughout the district from Cyclone Gabrielle, and what our biggest needs are. The results from this survey will also help us to plan for recovery support going forward.

## The approach taken

An online survey was sent out to the community, opening on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and closing 9<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The survey included questions about farming, business and mental health and wellbeing.

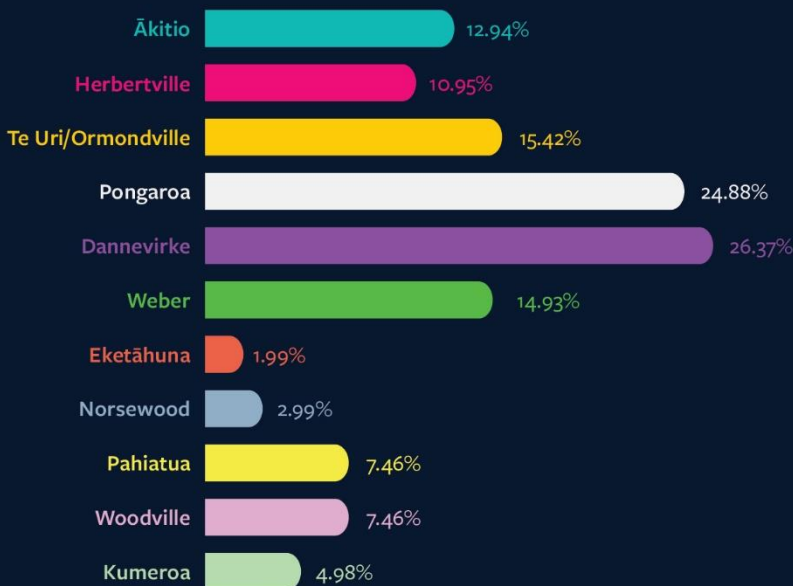
201 responses were captured, with the majority of those being from farmers / growers / lifestyle block owners.

# Survey Results

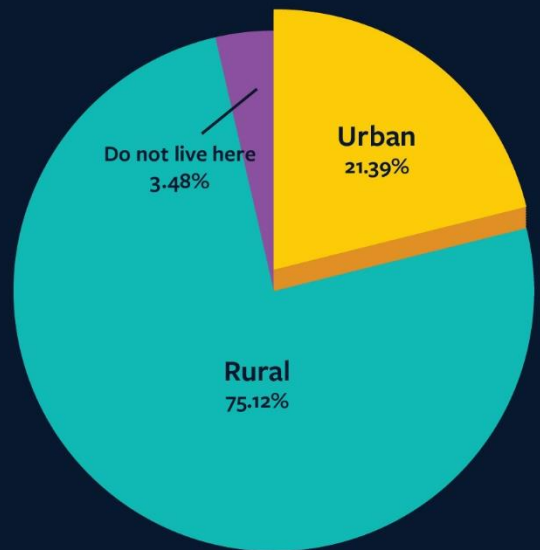
The Impact Assessment Survey received 201 responses.

Over half of these people are from Dannevirke and Pongaroa. The majority of respondents are rural based, with majority of them being a farmer/grower or lifestyle block owner.

Q1. Which of these towns (or nearby) best describes where you have had the most impact relating to Cyclone Gabrielle?



Q2. Do you live in an urban or rural area?



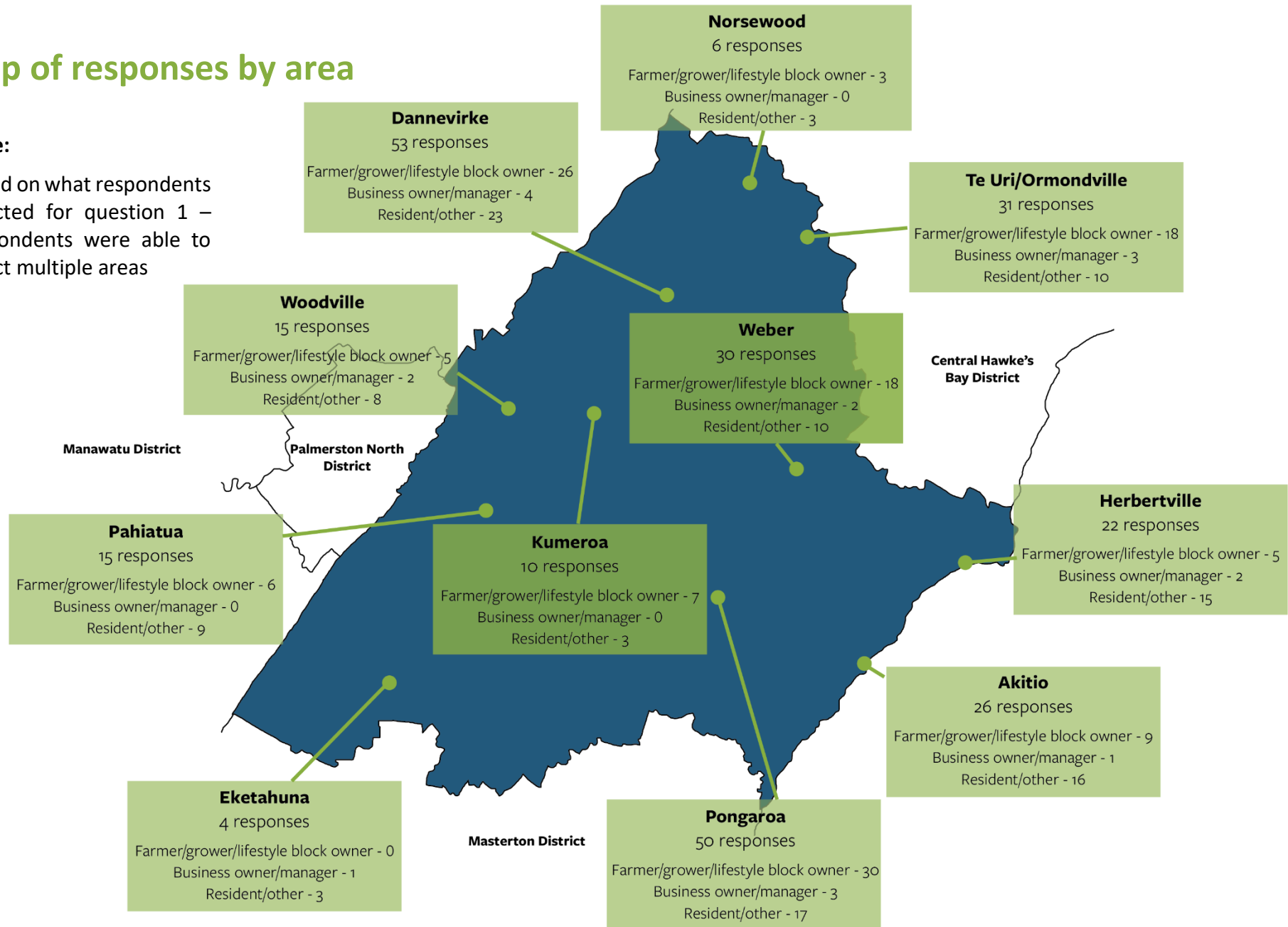
Q3. Which of the following best describes your situation (as it relates to impacts from Cyclone Gabrielle)?



## Map of responses by area

**Note:**

Based on what respondents selected for question 1 – respondents were able to select multiple areas





# Farmer/Grower/Lifestyle Block Owner Responses

## Summary

We asked those who were farmers/growers/lifestyle block owners to answer the following questions. 77 people completed these questions.

There were a variety of farm sizes and types included in the answers to these questions.

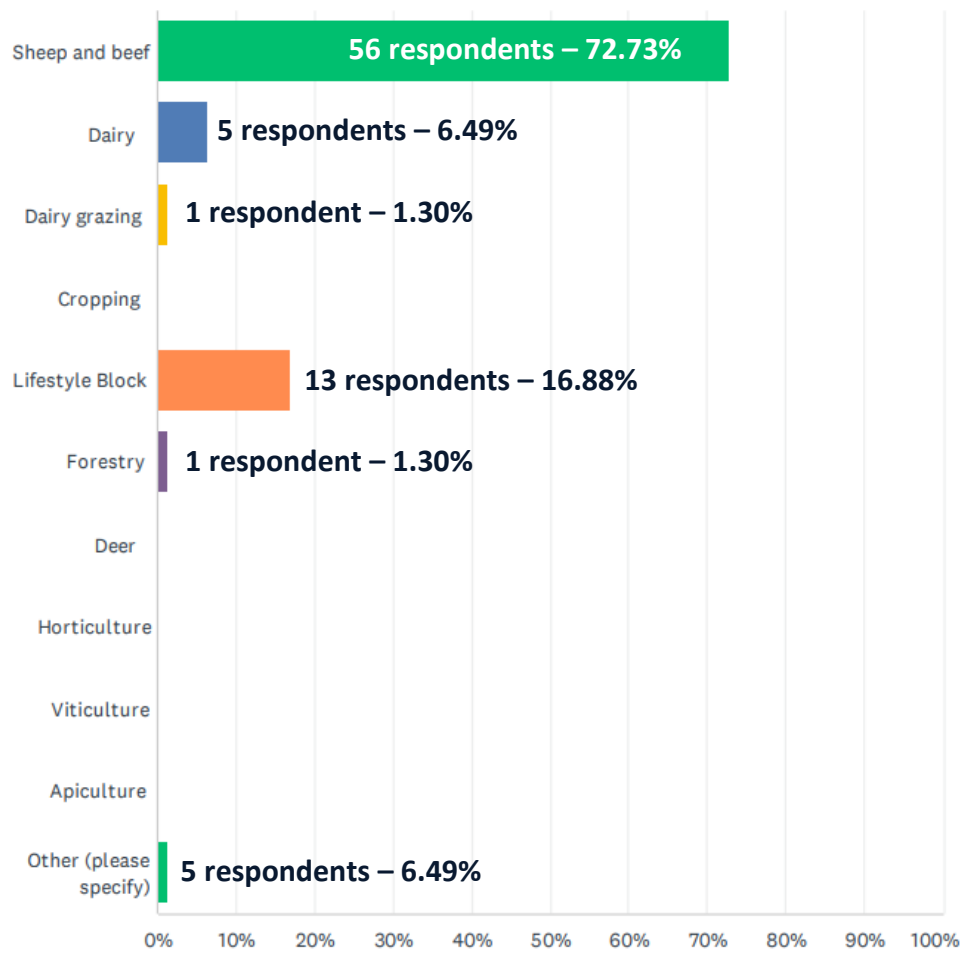
- 30 of the 77 respondents have farms sized 100-500 hectares, and 26 farms are 500+ hectares.
- The majority of the farms are sheep and beef, followed by lifestyle blocks and dairy farms.
- A lot of the farms also have other activities undertaken on their farm, including forestry, dairy grazing, and cropping.
- The majority of the respondents own their farms, with a handful of leaseholders and managers also responding.

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### Q4. What is the total size of your farm? Please state in hectares.

0-5 hectares	8 farms
5-100 hectares	13 farms
100-500 hectares	30 farms
500+ hectares	26 farms

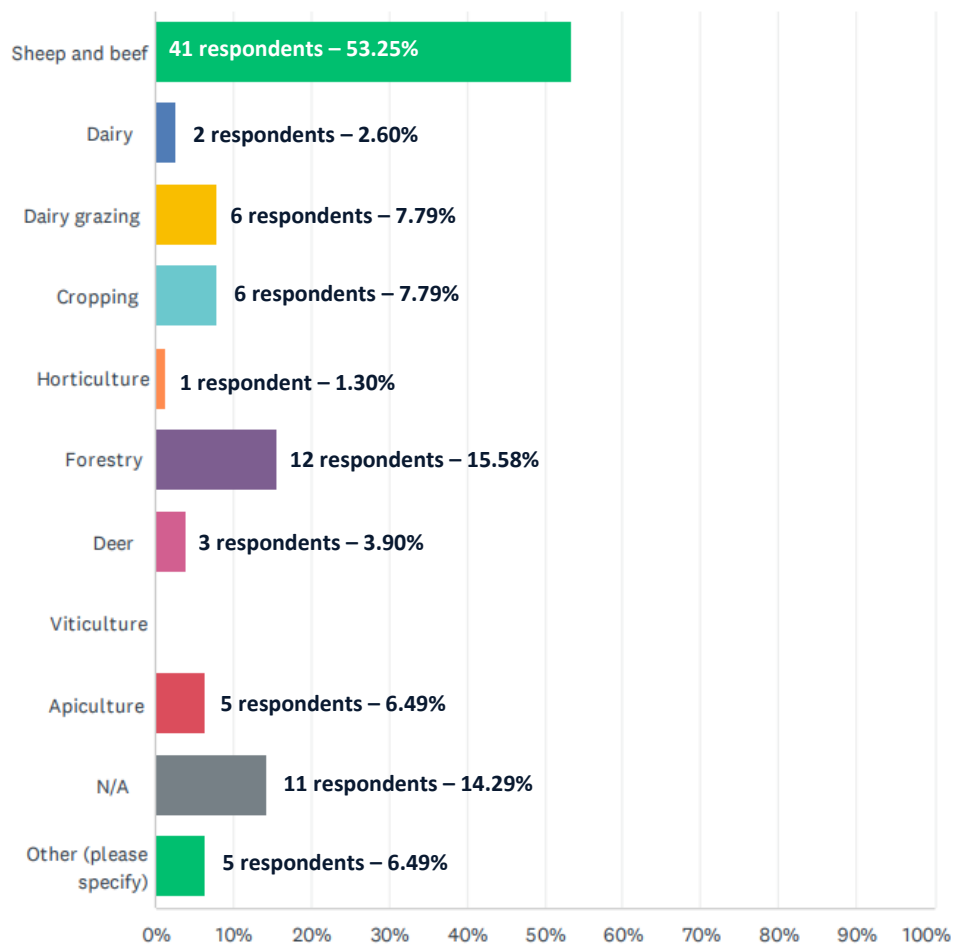
## Q5. Please select the main activity that is undertaken on your farm:





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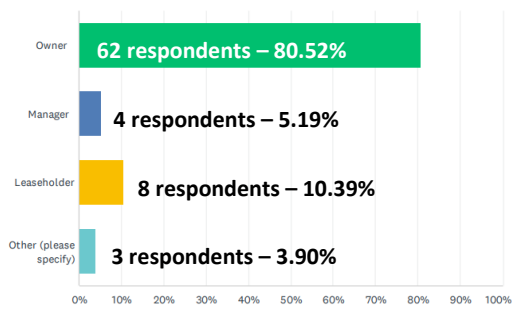
**Q6. What *other* types of activity are undertaken on your farm?  
(Select all that apply):**



The 'Other' activities specified were:

- Permaculture and small groups of animals
- Vegetable and fruit growing for family
- Cattle stud
- Agricultural contractor

## Q7. What best describes the nature of your role on the farm?



The 'Other' activities specified were:

- Farm hand
- Owner of one block, share farmer on other
- Part owner

## Farm Impact Summary

These questions were asked to understand the impacts on farm from Cyclone Gabrielle. Across all farm types, the most common impacts felt were:

- fencing damage
- slipping
- infrastructure damage
- silt and debris

66 respondents said they have had some type of farm damage, with an estimated \$7,806,400 of damage reported. This figure is likely to be a lot higher as a lot of farmers are yet to estimate a monetary value of damage.

### Slipping:

- **91%** of respondents reported some slipping on farm. This was spread around the district, with the majority of respondents being from Pongaroa, Dannevirke, Weber and Ormondville/Te Uri.
- **45%** of respondents had some slipping, but the percentage of land affected was less than **10%**.
- **34%** of respondents reported **10-20%** of land affected, and **11.68%** of respondents reported **20%** or more of their land affected by slipping. The majority of farms affected by the more severe slipping are in the Akitio/Pongaroa area.

### Fencing:

- 65 respondents had some conventional wire fencing damage. Approximately **106,657m** of fencing damage was reported.
- At an estimated cost of **\$25K per km**, this is a total cost of **\$2.66M**. Based on the 65 respondents who reported conventional fencing damage, this represents an average cost per farm of **\$41K**.
- This seems to be widely in the Pongaroa and Weber areas, with most other areas in Tararua also reporting some damage.
- 46 respondents also reported some electric fencing damage.

### Farm infrastructure:

- 54 respondents reported damage on their farm tracks, with approximately **78,890 total** metres being reported. Other comments also stated that a lot or all their farm tracks have been damaged, but no figure was provided.
- 53 respondents reported culverts or bridges damaged on their farm. Approximately **257** bridges/culverts were reported damaged. This was spread throughout the district, with a lot being in the Akitio/Pongaroa area.

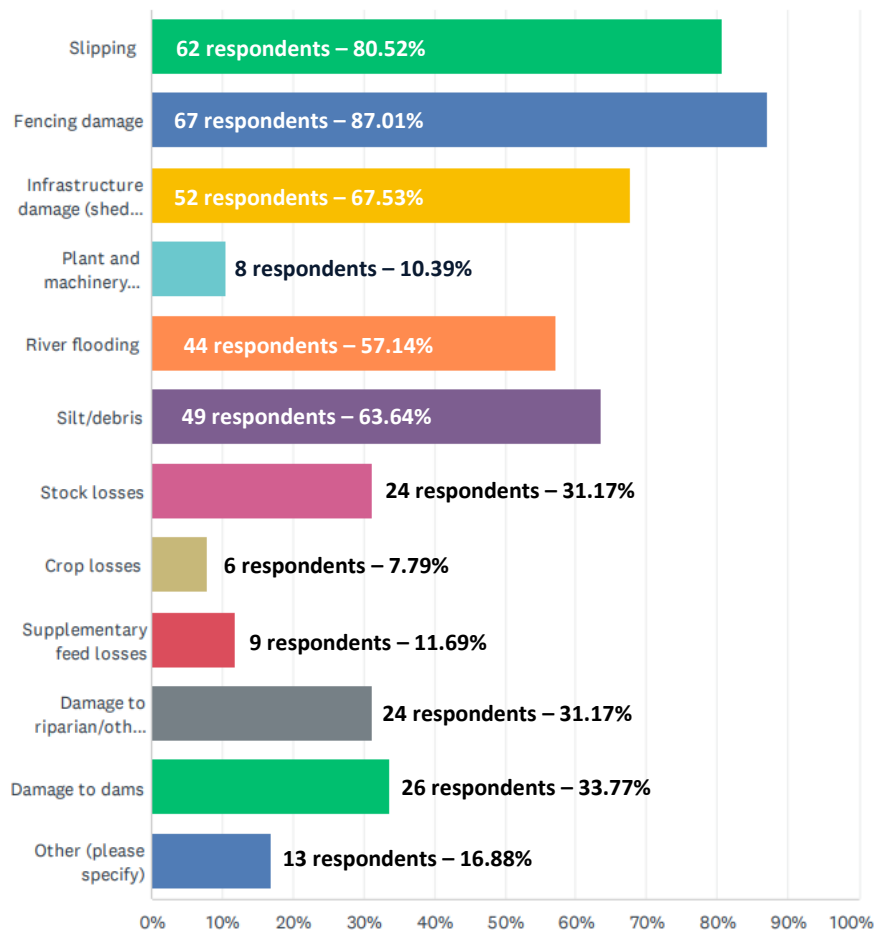
### Stock

- 38 respondents reported loss of stock due to Cyclone Gabrielle. Approximately 1,969 were reported across the 38 farms.
- **32% of the 77** respondents also reported some animal health issues due to the cyclone. These include foot problems, wool rot, fly strike and parasites. (Please see question 21 for further detail).

## Other issues reported

- Some cropping and trees have been lost due to Cyclone Gabrielle damage, with approximately **1445 hectares** of forestry damage across 22 farms
- A lot of farmers have reported difficulties with stock movements, on and off farm
- It is reported that there is a lack of funding to lifestyle block owners
- Some on farm damage is not covered by insurance
- Road closures are still affecting accessibility
- Mental health and burnout are a major concern amongst a lot of farmers

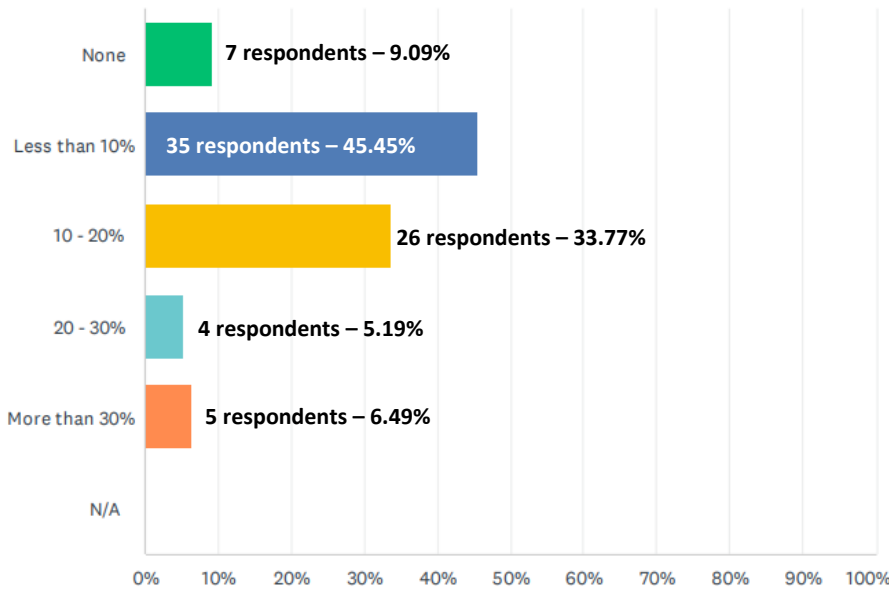
## Q8. What have been the impacts to your farm from Cyclone Gabrielle? (Select all that apply)



The 'Other' damage specified included:

- Damage to riverbanks
- Tools, water pump, personal belongings, partial house and veggie garden damage
- Lost main water line
- Damage to vehicle
- Loss of flood gate structures
- Fallen and uprooted trees

**Q9. Approximately what percentage of your land has been impacted by slips? (Please include the slip scar/face and the resultant debris/sediment over pasture)**



**Q10. Approximately how many hectares of pasture/land was lost from streambank erosion?**

0-1 hectares	11 farms
1-5 hectares	16 farms
5-10 hectares	5 farms
10+ hectares	9 farms

**Q11. Approximately how many metres of conventional wire fencing has been damaged/lost on your property?**

- Approximately **106,657** total metres of conventional fencing damaged / lost
- At an estimated cost of \$25K per km, this is a total cost of \$2.66M
- Based on 65 respondents who reported conventional fencing damage, this represents an average cost per farm of \$41K

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**Q12. Approximately how many metres of electric fencing has been damaged/lost on your property?**

- Approximately **55,594** total metres of electric fencing damaged / lost

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**Q13. Approximately how many metres of farm tracks have you had damaged as a result of Cyclone Gabrielle?**

Approximately **78,890** total metres of farm tracks damaged across **54 farms** (other comments stating all tracks or a lot of tracks damaged, but no figure provided).

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**Q14. Approximately how many culverts and bridges will you need to replace as a result of Cyclone Gabrielle?**

Approximately **257 culverts / bridges** requiring replacement across **53 farms**.

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**Q15. Approximately how many stock have you lost from Cyclone Gabrielle?**

Approximately **1,969** stock lost across **38 farms**.

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**Q16. Approximately how many hectares of cropping have you lost to Cyclone Gabrielle?**

Approximately **126.2 hectares** of cropping lost across **10 farms**.

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**Q17. Approximately how many hectares of regrassing/pasture renewal are needed from Cyclone Gabrielle?**

Approximately **634.7 hectares** of regrassing / pasture renewal needed across **36 farms**.



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**Q18. Approximately how many metres of riparian planting have you lost from Cyclone Gabrielle?**

Approx **4,390 metres** of riparian planting lost across **19 farms**.

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**Q19. Approximately how many hectares of trees planted for erosion control have you lost from Cyclone Gabrielle?**

Approximately **205.7 hectares** of trees planted for erosion control lost across **28 farms**.

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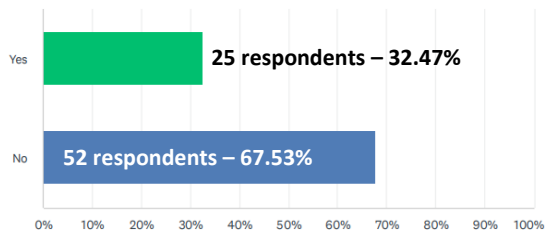
**Q20. Approximately how many hectares of forestry have been damaged/lost?**

Approximately **144.9 hectares** of forestry damage across **22 farms**.

- 0-1ha – 4 farms
- 1-5ha – 11 farms
- 5-10ha – 2 farms
- 10+ ha – 5 farms

0-1 hectares	4 farms
1-5 hectares	11 farms
5-10 hectares	2 farms
10+ hectares	5 farms

**Q21. Are you experiencing or expecting any animal health issues as a result of Cyclone Gabrielle?**



The animal health issues specified were:

- Lamb survival and weight loss in lambs
- Foot problems
- Wool rot
- Fly strike
- Animal cluster death
- Parasites
- Mastitis
- Salmonella
- Worms
- Stressed cows and slipped pregnancies
- Lamé cows
- Bogged sheep
- Viral pneumonia

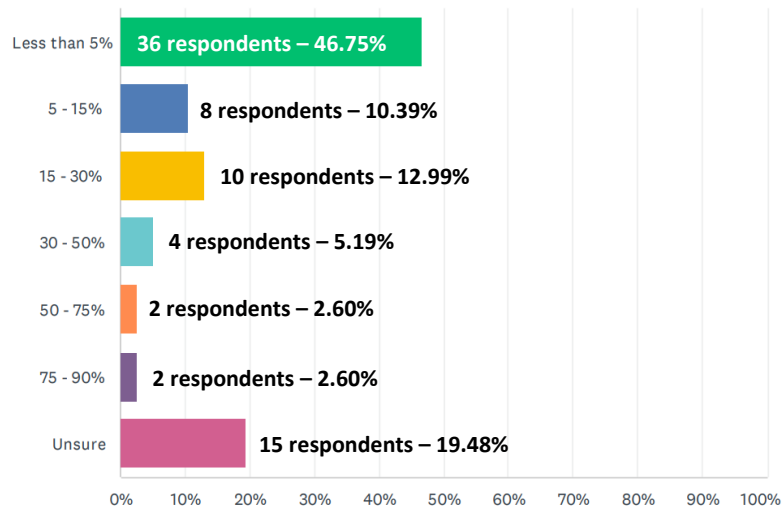
**Q22. If you are able to put an approximate \$ figure on the impacts sustained to your farm by Cyclone Gabrielle, please state this below:**

Approximately **\$7,806,400** total damage reported by **66 respondents**. This figure will be higher, as a lot of farmers are yet to estimate a monetary value of damage, or have estimated some things but not others.

0-\$5K	8 farms
\$5-50K	28 farms
\$50-250K	24 farms
\$250K+	6 farms

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**Q23. Insurance cover - please provide an estimate of the percentage of total damage you've suffered which would be covered by your insurance?**



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## Q24. Please briefly describe any other impacts that you have experienced from the Cyclone that have not already been captured in this survey

Answers to this question included:

- Major problems with access with stock around farm
- Difficulties with stock movements
- Riverbed moving towards property
- Paddocks set aside for hay are ruined
- Staff burnout
- Mental health and stress, panic attacks, exhaustion
- Ongoing fencing repairs has taken farmers away from other essential farm work
- Road closures effecting accessibility, school bus travel and getting to and from school and work
- Unable to hire machinery or fencers for farm clean-up
- Lack of funding available to lifestyle blocks
- Communication issues – phone, internet, power
- Loss of native regeneration area
- Blocked novaflow pipes
- Loss of production due to trade lambs and young cattle not doing well through the cyclone
- Inflation – meaning everything is more expensive to fix
- Loss of water pipes, water pump and systems damaged
- Emotional impact on farmers/workers and their families
- Reduced grazing due to wet and damaged land
- Financial stress
- Worries when bad weather hits

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## Q25. Are you experiencing local workforce employee shortages?

Approximately **25 respondents** stated they are experiencing local workforce employee shortages.

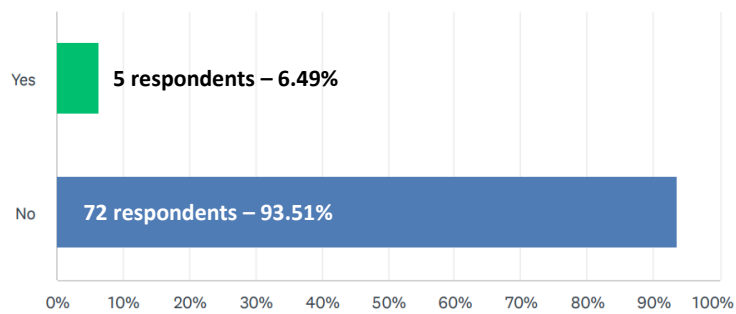
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## Q26. What is your present appetite to employ local unskilled apprentices or youth?

Approximately **9 respondents** stated that they would be happy to employ local unskilled apprentices or youth.

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## Q27. Are you looking to employ migrant workers?



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## Q28. Would you like to talk to anyone from the below organisations regarding your situation?

- 32 of 77 Farmer/Grower/Lifestyle respondents are seeking support
- The most sought after supporting being 12 people wanting to connect with the Rural Support Trust
- 50 did not want / need any further support

## Business Impact Summary

We asked those who are business owners/managers to answer the following questions. 15 people completed these questions.

A lot of the impacts and risks for these businesses are around loss of production and cash flow. It is still too wet for some of these businesses to work, and accessibility has had a play in the loss of production.

All respondents mentioned that their business is still viable given the present impacts they are facing, but many are still facing issues like longer travel times, loss of income and reduction in hours.

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### Q29. Please briefly describe any impacts facing your business that you have experienced following Cyclone Gabrielle?

- Too wet to work
- The road we are working on was closed for a week. Too wet to work and couldn't get trucks up to the port in Napier because of road closures and congestion. Huge impact on production
- Lost business due to not being able to get to certain locations, because bridges were out of action
- Lost about \$15,000 in revenue due to loss of customers travelling over the period that the Napier Taupo Road was closed. This included tour buses that would normally stop off to eat at the café three times a week
- Withdrawal of funds
- Collate and purchase fixed assets
- Very limited number of sites available for visiting guests
- Hospitality business – had no damage but due to road closures, staff were unable to get to work and we had fewer clientele, locals, workers, and visitors to the area
- Income down
- Loss of production due to flood damage, cash flow issues
- Reduced campground ability to accommodate travellers
- Still rebuilding a major stream crossing, many fence repairs, loss of land from slips
- 90% reduction in sales in January/February. 60% reduction in sales March/April/May. Employee made redundant due to lack of sales. Damaged roads restricting truck movements. Selling assets due to lack of cashflow

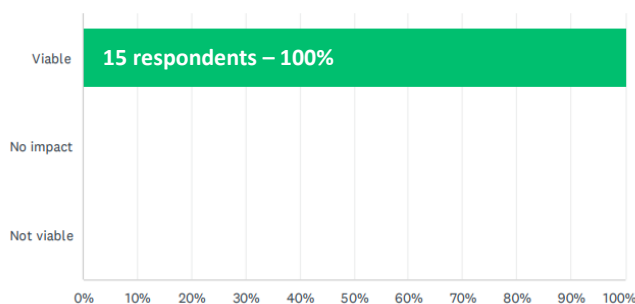
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### Q30. What are the medium-long term risks for your business following Cyclone Gabrielle?

- Financial loss after loss of production
- Risk of more flooding and access damage – would halt main sources of income
- Capital chain is running tight
- Loss of income
- Damaged roads and travellers choosing other destinations
- Fragile roading and land could further interrupt supply of raw materials required for production
- Unable to accommodate casual camping visitors due to damaged tent sites
- If sales do not recover, there is a risk the business will close

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### Q31. What is the future viability of your business given the present impacts you are facing?



Reasons why included:

- More work when dried out
- Back to normal production
- Bridges have been repaired, so able to deliver to those areas again
- Corporate strategy
- Income should improve once sites recover, and business is reopened to the public
- A successful and well supported business
- No stock losses and 90% of paddocks now viable
- Reduced costs and sold assets to get cash in to survive next season



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### Q32. Are you experiencing local workforce employee shortages?

2 respondents stated they are currently experiencing local workforce employee shortages.

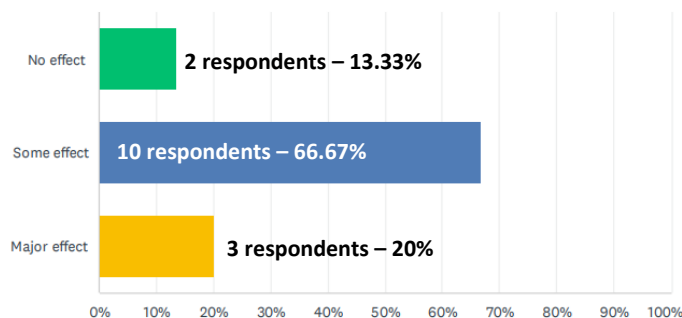
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### Q33. What is your present appetite to employ local unskilled apprentices or youth?

4 respondents stated that they have an appetite to employ local unskilled apprentices or youth.

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### Q34. What impact has Cyclone Gabrielle/Natural disasters had on you and your employee's ability to meet present costs of living?

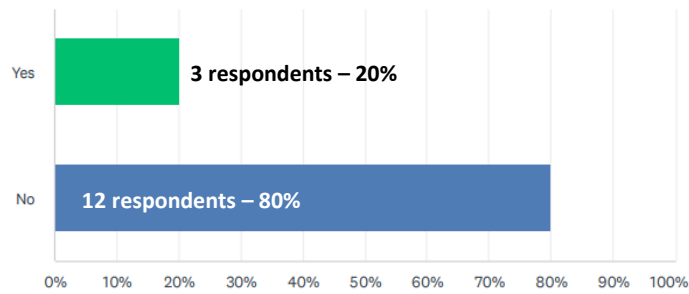


The comments to this question included:

- Loss of income
- Food, fruit and vege prices increased
- Talent shortage
- Loss of income means less cash to make repairs and improvements
- Longer travel to work
- Reduction in hours
- Low sales and cash flow
- Had to make employee redundant
- Unable to perform maintenance on equipment to ensure money is available to last through winter

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### Q35. Are you looking to employ migrant workers?



If yes, why?

- Shortage of human resources

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### Q36. What barriers are you facing, if any?

- Talent shortage
- Financial income of customers, spending only on necessary needs
- Continual weather patterns are making it hard to repair/recover
- Lack of cash flow due to poor sales compared to previous years

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### Q37. What can we help you with?

- 53.33% Would like help from appropriate organisation
- 33.33% Business support and information
- 26.67% Tax relief information

## Wellbeing Impact Summary

We asked all respondents the questions below. 120 people completed these questions.

### **Mental health and wellbeing:**

Mental health, stress and burnout seems to be playing a big factor throughout the district since Cyclone Gabrielle. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not all, 10 being significantly) the average answer was 4.3 for how the impacts of the cyclone have affected people's wellbeing.

A lot of this seems to be due to financial stress and burnout.

### **Funding and Insurance:**

**48%** of respondents have accessed funding for impacts caused by Cyclone Gabrielle. In terms of what people need, **23%** of people stated that they need financial assistance now, with another **33%** stating that they will need financial assistance in the longer term.

**33%** of respondents stated that they had to make an insurance claim due to Cyclone Gabrielle, with some reporting that they have had difficulties with the process due to long wait times and some things not being covered by insurance.

### **What we should be focusing on:**

We asked people what they need right now. After financial assistance, **18%** of people responded that they need practical help e.g. to repair damage. Other needs included business support, advice or mentoring, counselling or advice on coping with stress and worry and improved road access.

The main long term needs included financial assistance, practical help e.g. to repair damage, road repairs and clearing of debris from waterways.

When asked what people think the Tararua District Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery Programme should be focusing on, **81%** responded with roading and bridge repair and resilience. This was followed closely by continuity of telecommunications and power, and river and debris management.

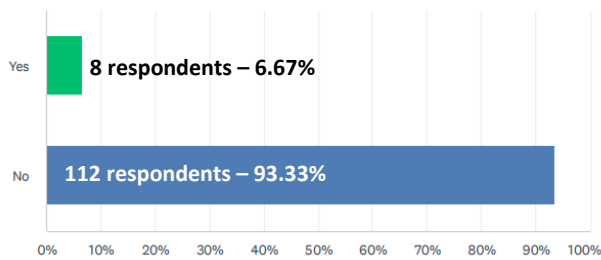
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**Q38. On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being not at all, 10 being significantly), how have the impacts from the cyclone affected your wellbeing?**

The average for this question was **4.3**.

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**Q39. Have you been hindered from recovering from the effects of the Cyclone due to a disability?**



**Comments:**

- Due to injury
- Balance problems
- Shingles
- Aging body finding it hard to do physical work
- Mental illness

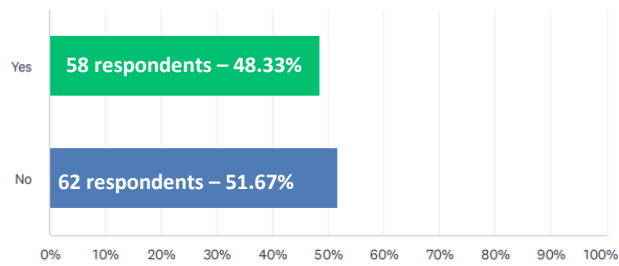
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**Q40. To what extent was your home/property (not farm) directly impacted by the floods and other damage?**

This question was asked on a scale from 1-10 (one being not impacted at all, 10 being impacted significantly). The average for this question was **2.1**.

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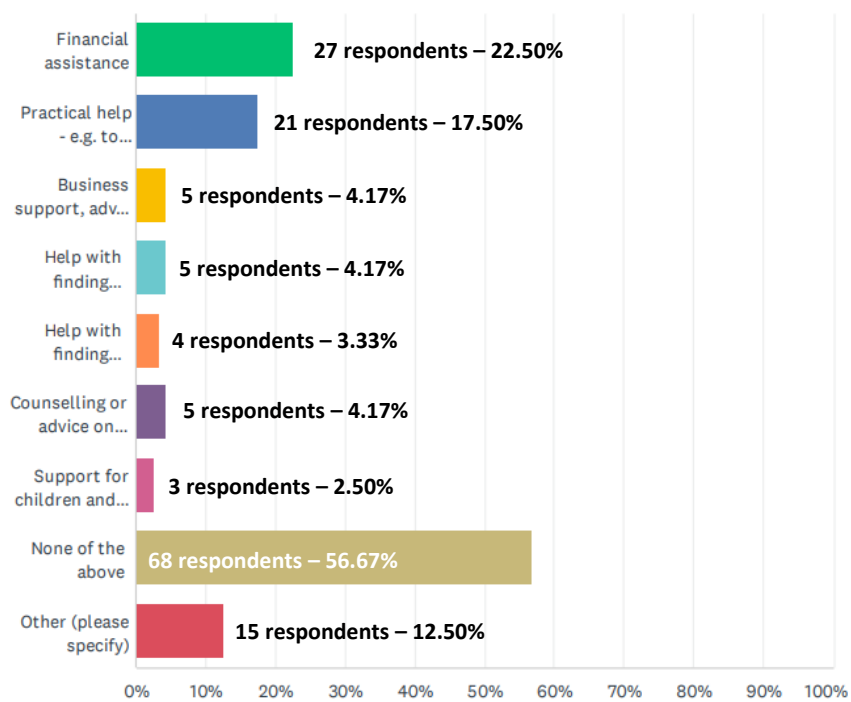
## Q41. Have you accessed grants from government or other organisations for the impacts from the cyclone?



The funding listed included:

- MPI
- MSD
- Tararua Mayoral Relief Fund
- DIA
- Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua
- Natural disaster subsidy
- MBIE
- Westpac bank
- Farmlands grant

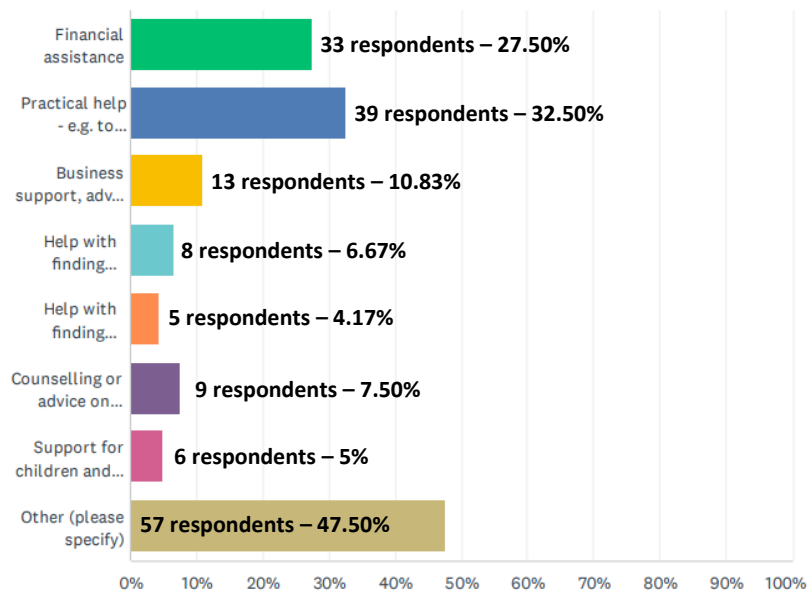
## Q42. In terms of your situation, what do you need right now?



Other needs specified included:

- Roads being fixed, improved road access
- Access to funding to repair farm tracks and fencing
- School bus access
- Logs blocking rivers cleared
- Metal to replace driveways
- Resources, fencing gear

### Q43. To help us plan longer term recovery support, what do you think you will need in the slightly longer term, i.e. in around six months' time?

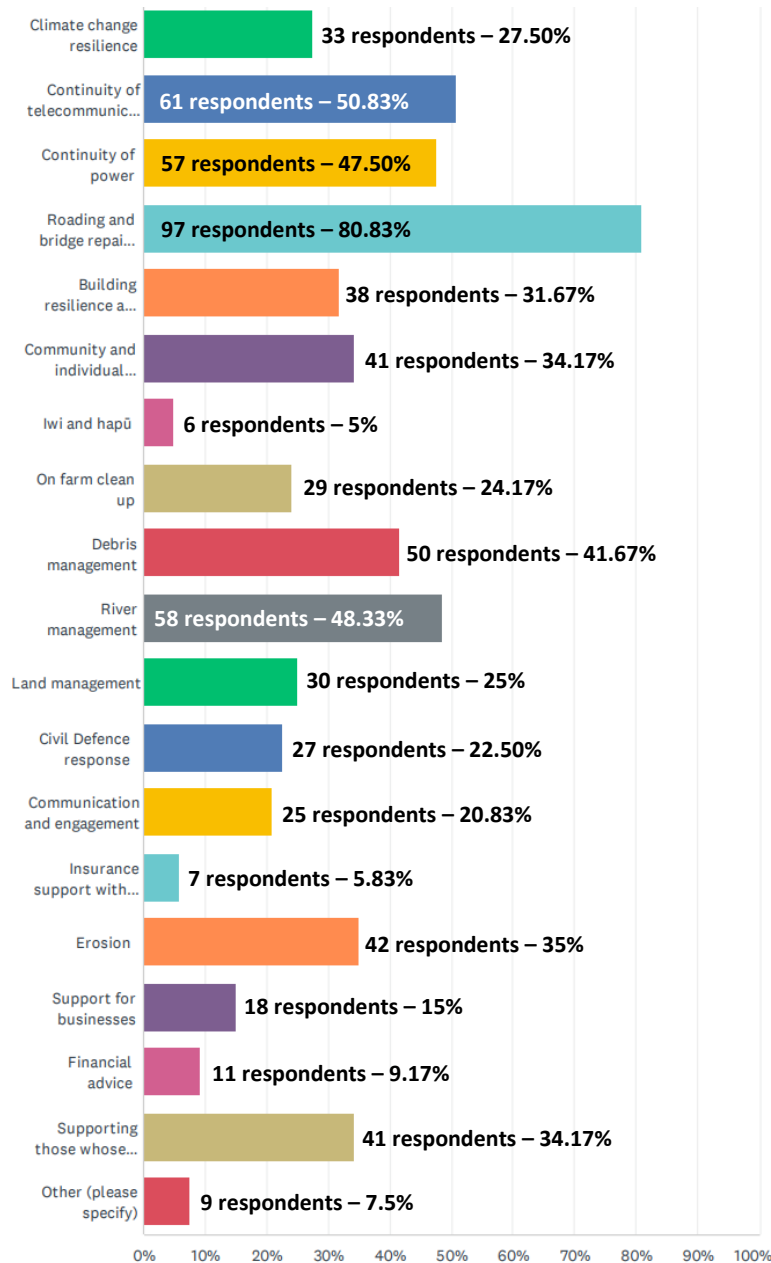


Other longer-term needs specified included:

- Erosion control advice
- Fix ongoing water issues
- Road repairs/improved road access
- Clearing debris from surrounding streams to avoid future flooding
- Assistance with consenting
- Diggers and fencers
- A break from the farm – it isn't easy to find someone to mind the farm while owners are on holiday
- Costs to repair/replace fences
- Topsoil
- Drains being cleared to prevent water spilling over onto farmland
- Tax/accounting advice
- More community support days



**Q44. Thinking specifically about the impacts on where you live in the Tararua District, what do you think are the most important things we should be focusing on? Please choose as many as you like**



Other things to be focused on included:

- Water restrictions
- Halting the continued planting of pine trees
- Older bridges need to be fixed

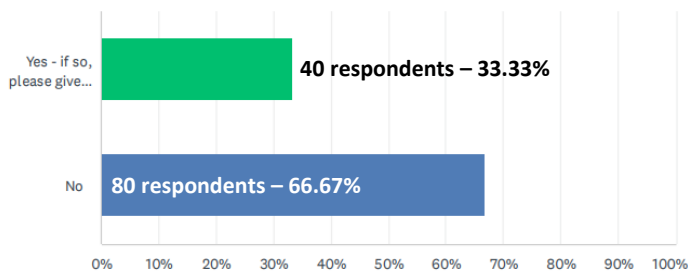
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**Q45. If you'd like to tell us in more detail about the answers you gave above, please continue here**

- Resilience
- Financial help
- River slash/debris
- Brainstorm/idea sessions with farmers and landowners, roading crews and contractors – get a register of machines in the area (bulldozers, tractors, trucks), so when another weather event hits, these can be utilised
- More cell towers
- Should be using funds for medical care, hospitals, education and conserving natural resources

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**Q46. Have you had to place an insurance claim relating to the effects of the cyclone either for your home, business, or farm?**



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**Q47. If you answered yes to the question above - Have you had any difficulties with your insurance claims experience? Please tell us here**

- Still ongoing/in progress
- Delays in getting an assessor onto property
- Lack of communication from insurance companies
- Quick and easy settlements
- Claim actioned quickly with no problems
- Lack of cover on farm
- Contents and vehicle insurance paid out quickly – house insurance taking some time

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**Q48. Despite the trauma, shock and damage of Cyclone Gabrielle, Tararua District people did and are still doing an incredible job of supporting each other. Did something happen during Cyclone Gabrielle and/or its aftermath that makes you particularly proud of your community, and would you like to tell us about it?**

Some of the answers provided to this question were:

- The food supplied to the coastal areas was awesome, and the Council responded well to the roading
- The bringing together of the community after the Cyclone. It has been an opportunity for this to develop
- Townie friends came out to help fence. And a stranger (but no longer a stranger) came and gave us bulldozer work that gave us access to half the farm
- The community pulling together to help each other and check in on each other
- Awesome local business lent us a pump and refused payment, and a neighbouring farmer helped us out with their tractor
- All of our heavy machinery operators/tractor drivers/farmers who were out and about helping anywhere they could
- Very proud of all community support and Scanpower and TreeSmart for getting power restored
- A group of volunteers came the day the nearby bridge was able to be driven on by 4x4 and brought food and offered their help
- Neighbours checked up on each other. Local people helped me when my car got flooded and I needed a place to stay
- Small communities working together, supporting each other, and creating a plan for the future
- Our local community assisted with fencing debris removal and re-fencing

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