

Was NZ's new online sea level rise tool targeted?

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A [new interactive tool](#) giving fresh sea level rise projections for New Zealand's entire coastline has been hit with heavy traffic – and possibly a malicious attack – that forced it temporarily offline this morning.

The tool – titled Our Changing Coastline: Te Ao Hurihuri, Te Ao Hau and developed by data management and analytics platform Takiwā - [reveals how sinking land and rising oceans could push coastal seas](#) around many parts of the country much higher than first thought.

Using it, people can scroll over some 7434 sites – covering every 2km of coastline – to see how their local areas may be transformed under various climate change scenarios.

By 8.30am, the site was receiving around 1000 requests for information per second – and users were asked to be patient.

Developers reportedly had to switch to backup servers and increase processing capacity, with 16 processing cores trying to handle demand.

By mid-morning, the site could only be accessed by password amid suspicious activity and was taken offline for maintenance soon after.

The website's official account tweeted just before 10.30am: "As traffic to our website continues to increase, it's likely that some of the problems with access are due to suspicious activity. This is the reality of working on climate change and related issues. We're doing our best to identify and resolve these problems."

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— NZSeaRise (@NZSeaRise) [May 1, 2022](#)

By noon, it was up running again. The Herald has approached Takiwā for comment on whether the site may have been deliberately targeted.

Dr Sanjana Hattotuwa, a researcher with Te Pūnaha Matatini's Disinformation Project, said he'd observed a notable amount of negative chatter about the website and media coverage across social media channels he monitors.

While much of that chatter involved climate change denialism, he stressed that still didn't indicate the activity had translated into an attack on the website.