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Homer Tunnel Safety Improvements Project

An aerial photo showing the south wall of the new avalanche and rockfall shelter taking shape.

December has been busy as work moves up a gear on building a new avalanche and rockfall shelter on the Te Anau side of the Homer Tunnel.

November to May is the only time when the weather is settled enough in this challenging alpine environment to safely build the shelter. It's part of a \$29 million work programme the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi is doing, with its crown infrastructure partners, to improve safety for everyone using the Homer Tunnel.

The tunnel is a critical link on SH94 from Te Anau to Milford Sound Piopiotahi and provides the only road access for the thousands of people who travel every year to one of our most iconic visitor destinations. It's also an economic lifeline for tourism and commercial fishing businesses based at Milford Sound and Te Anau. They depend on the road for their prosperity, to create jobs and continue their ongoing significant contribution to the on-going economic growth of the wider Fiordland area.

New Avalanche and Rockfall Shelter Construction

Removing as shown in the photo below, the existing 70-year-old shelter was completed last month and carried out at night to minimise disruptions for tunnel users.



A steady stream of the approximately 150 pre-cast concrete modules required for the new shelter are regularly arriving on site. The wall on the southern side of the shelter is clearly visible as you can see in the photo below. These modules are made off-site then transported to the tunnel for assembly.



Construction Timetable

What	When
Site shut down for the Christmas break	22 December 2023 to 7 January 2024
Construction resumes, with a targeted completion date of May 2024	8 January 2024 to May 2024
Typical working days until February 2024: Two crews working split shifts	Monday to Saturday from 7.00am to 10.00pm Some Sunday work (depending on weather) Some night work 8pm to 6am

Careful planning and input from both the local community and key stakeholders are all major factors in the various approaches being used to minimise disruption for people using the tunnel. Measures include the methodical staging of construction work and reducing on-site activity at the busiest time at the tunnel. Generally, this is doing a good job of minimising disruptions for the people travelling to and from Milford Sound.

Minimising traffic delays

	Time	Delays	Timing
Typical day	7am to 10pm	No delays. Tunnel remains single lane.	Until May 2024
Evening closures (These will be kept to a minimum) so far, we haven't needed to use	6pm to 10pm		On-going but not every night. Closures publicised well in advance using a variety of channels such as the existing roadside electronic message boards, and the Milford Road website www.milfordroad.co.nz
Full night closures	8pm to 6am	Tunnel closed except for emergency vehicles.	Closures publicised well in advance using a variety of channels such as the existing roadside electronic message boards, and the Milford Road website www.milfordroad.co.nz

The new avalanche and rockfall shelter - what you need to know

- It will make SH94 the only road link to Milford Sound Piopiotahi more efficient and safer for the thousands of people who use it every year to travel to our most iconic tourist attraction.
- This largest and final stage of a \$29 million safety improvement project on the Te Anau side of the Homer Tunnel and carried out by the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and its Crown Infrastructure partners.
- The new shelter will deliver better avalanche and rockfall protection at the eastern tunnel entrance.



More project information is available at:

nzta.govt.nz/projects/homer-tunnel-safety-improvements/
nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh94-milford-road/

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