MIN-4160 Update on Waka Kotahi support for Thames Coromandel District Council on the Coromandel Recovery

26 April 2023

Provide an update on how Waka Kotahi is working with Thames Coromandel District Council (TCDC) ahead of your next meeting with TCDC and community members on 27 April 2023.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

Waka Kotahi and TCDC are working closely together on the Coromandel recovery and resilience. Details of the approach to this work and the works that are underway are as follows:

Governance and approach

- A Programme Director has been appointed by Waka Kotahi to coordinate resilience and recovery works between TCDC and Waka Kotahi. The Programme Director has met with several people, including TCDC Recovery Manager (Stephen Town) and its Roading Team.

- A joint Programme Steering Group has been set up between TCDC and Waka Kotahi with the first meeting scheduled for 11 May 2023.

- Together we are exploring a joined-up delivery model for those recovery works that sit outside business-as-usual maintenance work. The scoping of this is ongoing as both Waka Kotahi and TCDC are in the final stages of obtaining the information needed to fully understand the scope and scale the further work required on the Coromandel roading network, beyond maintenance activity.

Joint planning initiated

- Contingency Planning work, led by TCDC, is underway to jointly plan for potential road closures in the future, including over the coming months. This planning looks at a range of options, including non-roading options, to maintain access for the community.

- Linked with this is an Operational Network Plan, which sets out how Waka Kotahi and TCDC will operate the network and coordinate works on Coromandel roads, with a focus on the period in which State Highway 25A (SH25A) is closed. The Plan is complete and being used currently.

- Regular cross agency hui ensure communications and engagement are aligned, and agencies can provide each other with support where needed. This includes Waka Kotahi, Waikato Regional Council, TCDC and the local tourism body.

- Waka Kotahi and Waikato Regional Council are actively supporting TCDC to ensure recovery and resilience activities are prioritised in the 2024-2034 Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) period.

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The RLTP timeframes are to be confirmed at this time, given changes with the Government Policy Statement and National Land Transport Programme timeframes.

- A strategic response for the Coromandel transport network is being scoped. Together with TCDC we will rapidly develop a strategic view of the future of access and transport in the Coromandel to support the recovery works and lead into a broader resilience business case (subject to funding). This would start in approximately three weeks and take three months to complete.

Physical works underway

- Waka Kotahi is acutely aware of the importance of ongoing access via SH25 to the Coromandel community and economy. To keep the SH25 network open, the following work is underway:
    - Regular monitoring of significant slip sites and geotechnical inspections every two months.
    - Prioritising the clearing of drains and culverts.
    - Continuing to clear vegetation to maintain a clear space for heavy vehicles.
    - Monitoring traffic and truck volumes around the peninsula.
    - Monitoring travel times around the peninsula so any causes of significant delay are identified and quickly acted on.
    - Finalising destination signage changes so visitors find the best way to their destination.
    - Continuing to assess the safety and capacity of one-lane bridges and critical intersections.
    - Careful planning of the timing and type of maintenance work to minimise impacts on road users, landowners, and communities.

State Highway 25A current status

- The critical task of geotechnical investigations was completed earlier in April 2023, and we are now analysing the information to identify the optimum solution that enables the route to be open as soon as possible.

- A report following the investigations will identify the right option to progress and how long it will take to complete. We are working with your office to confirm a date in the first half of May 2023 for a public announcement of the chosen option to reconnect SH25A.

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