

MINO-0426 Otira Tunnel comms plan and meeting update

14 July 2022

Provide an update on the meeting between KiwiRail and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency held on 13 July 2022 regarding the prohibition of rail passengers using Otira Tunnel, including the communications plan and media statement being made.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

Waka Kotahi met with KiwiRail on 13 July 2022 to discuss the prohibition of rail passengers using Otira tunnel which took effect from 5pm on Monday 11 July 2022. Waka Kotahi has concerns for the safety of passengers who may be required to disembark the train and evacuate the 8.5 km tunnel on foot in an emergency situation or breakdown.

The meeting was constructive with progress being made in certain areas; however, some concerns remain around KiwiRail's demonstration of safety controls, acceptable oversight and accountability of critical risk management. Waka Kotahi has also requested evidence regarding its Risk Assessments and assessment of the tunnel condition.

Waka Kotahi expects that KiwiRail will be able to furnish some items very quickly, but others will take some time for KiwiRail to arrange. Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail will work on these issues together over the coming days and weeks.

A media statement has been attached and will be used if required. If the issues are able to resolved quickly with only one KiwiRail service affected, then the statement will not be issued. If more than one service will be affected, then the decision to issue the statement will be made next week. Waka Kotahi will notify the Minister's Office and KiwiRail if the statement is being issued.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982