

Huntly project update

October 2018



Project kaiarahi Kawe Nikora and manutaki Warren McGrath at the Te Iringa Lagoon on the southern side of the Taupiri Range.

Cultural input from the start

Building a four-lane highway through a culturally sensitive area has been one of the challenges for the team planning and now building the Huntly section of the Waikato Expressway. It has also been one of the success stories.

A strong cultural input is reflected in the cultural understanding and protocols in place and in the pou, gateways and palisades that will mark significant sites when the road opens to traffic in early 2020.

Driving the cultural understanding and protocols onsite is project kaiarahi Kawe Nikora - whose role as a guardian sees her involved in anything from overseeing earthworks to cultural inductions.

Warren McGrath is the manutaki, the master carver and project manager overseeing the Cultural Symbolism Plan which will see stunning artwork at various points along the 15km route.

These two work closely together.

Kawe has been part of the team at Huntly since construction began in 2015. She is the eyes and ears of iwi and regularly reports progress and happenings to Waikato-Tainui's iwi representative and to the Tangata Whenua Working Group. The working group is made up of representatives from each of the seven marae within the works area.

Kawe's focus is to help the construction team understand and follow the correct protocols. She is

present when topsoil is removed, or when fish need to be re-homed ahead of waterway works. When archaeological sites have been uncovered, Kawe steps in and makes sure correct protocols are in place. Kawe attends all staff inductions so newcomers understand cultural aspects of the project.

"Kawe is an integral part of the Fulton Hogan-HEB construction team and her knowledge and experience is regularly called upon," says project director Tony Adams.

Warren joined the team to oversee and implement the Cultural Symbolism Plan. He has had a major role in the design of pou to be located in three key areas along the alignment. Two sites will be accessible by the public, and each pou will have a story to tell. Storyboards will be installed to tell the history of the area, and what the pou represent.

Pou will be sited at Ralph Road, the Taupiri Pass and Te Iringa Lagoon. The Ralph Road site is above the expressway and a carpark has been incorporated into the works. A series of pou will be constructed up at the Taupiri Summit but this area will not be accessible to the public. The third site is at Te Iringa Lagoon which

will have a carpark on the south-bound side of the expressway (entry and exit south-bound only).

A walking path will come off the carpark, go around the lagoon and give access to the pou site and also to the listed historic place of Rua's House. The house was built in 1879, and a brick chimney and orchard remain.

The other two major cultural symbolism sites are at Te Uapata and Otaahau Paa sites. They will both have tuuwahatawhata (palisades) and waharoa (gateways) reinstated. The Te Uapata Paa site will have a walkway accessible from Orini Road, and the Otaahau Paa will have a walkway off Gordonton Road.

Teamwork and collaboration with iwi on the Huntly project saw the Transport Agency and Hamilton consultancy Bloxam, Burnett and Olliver win the supreme award and regional planning award at the 2015 NZ Planning Institute's national awards.

"That spirit of partnership has continued into the construction phase of the project and one of the benefits will be some amazing artwork along the route," says Transport Agency Waikato portfolio manager Darryl Coalter.



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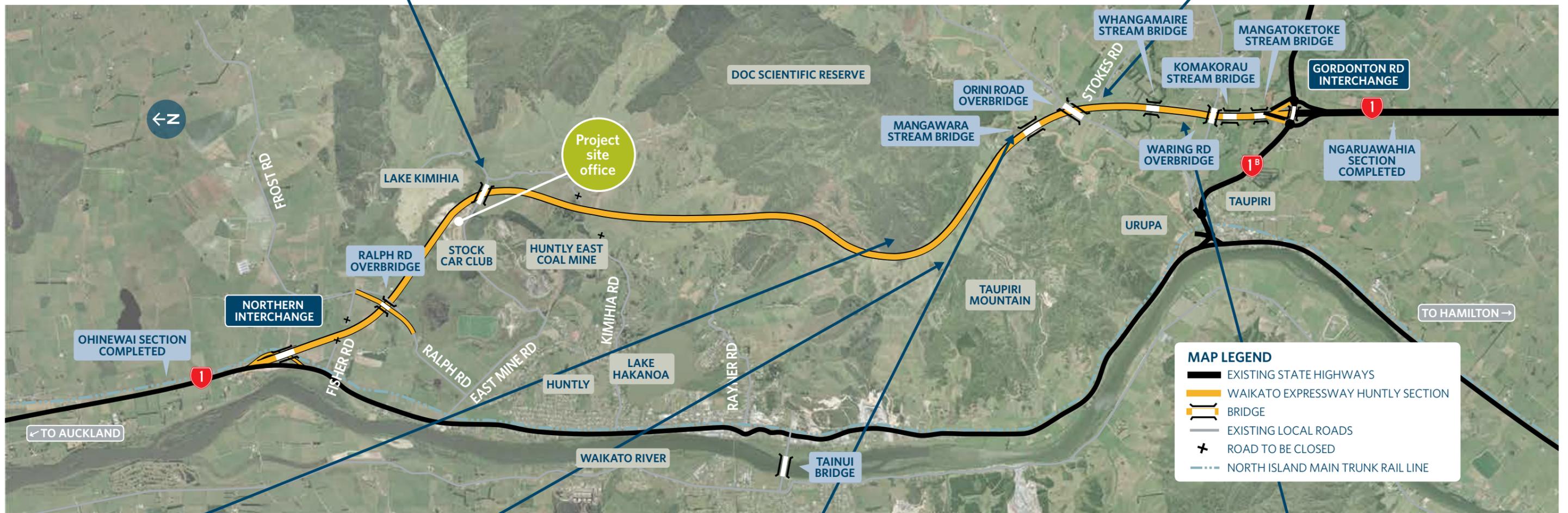
Focus on ecology: What's happening along the route



The 4ha Evans Road wetland will be a haven for waterfowl and native fish. The eel population was temporarily moved during works.



After mudfish were found in a farm drain it was fenced off and planted.



Geckos and skinks were captured and re-homed on the southern side of the Taupiri Range.



A stream diversion saw fish life moved downstream while works were done.



Te Iringa Lagoon has benefited from planting, "huglekultures" and stumperies establishing in the area.



These Australasian harrier hawk chicks, found in a burrow area, were left alone to fledge before work continued.



Public information day

Huntly is a completely greenfields project, which means most of the work is taking place out of sight across the countryside and over the Taupiri Range.

So the project team are looking forward to hosting a public information day on site on Saturday 27 October which will include bus rides along part of the new road.

"We are looking forward to this opportunity to showcase the project and talk to people about our work around the environment and ecology, pest management, bridge-building and cultural relationships," says Transport Agency Waikato portfolio manager Darryl Coalter.

It will be based at the site office, off McVie Road, Huntly East. People should use East Mine Road off SH1 to get to McVie Road.

The free event will run from 10am-2pm, and include various project displays and information, machinery and a kids' area. Food and refreshments will be available.

When: Saturday 27 October 2018
Where: Site office off McVie Road, Huntly East
Time: Between 10am-2pm



Stopping point for south-bound travellers

Part of the Huntly project involves creating a safe entry and exit point from the expressway to the Taupiri Scenic Reserve and the Te Iringa Lagoon on the southern side of Taupiri Range.

A carpark is being built near the lagoon, tracks developed and extensive plantings are already in place. The area will feature works from the Cultural Symbolism Plan.

This carpark will be south-bound entry and exit only, as it is not possible to have traffic turning right.

With the final earthworks season starting for the project, the focus is to complete the last of the cut and fill operations and to forge ahead with the pavement construction that has continued over the winter months.



Work under way on the carpark area between the expressway and Te Iringa Lagoon.



Information

Project site office
199 McVie Road



Freephone
0800 HUN INFO (486 463)

Lorraine Pennington

Fulton Hogan HEB Joint Venture, Stakeholder liaison manager

Phone 07 828 0137

Mobile 027 503 6749

Email lorraine.pennington@huntlyproject.co.nz

Simon Brandon

NZ Transport Agency, Communication and stakeholder liaison manager

Phone 07 958 7888

Mobile 021 615 461

Email simon.brandon@nzta.govt.nz