

Kaikōura earthquake newsletter

PROJECT UPDATE

Issue 3 / March 2017

From Duncan

Our work programme continues to ramp up with more than 150 people now on the ground clearing the slips and beginning to repair/rebuild the coastal rail and road transport networks.

This month we reached the significant milestone of reaching Ohau Point and beginning work on one of the largest and most complex of the 10 big slips to the north. This was after we'd spent several weeks using helicopters with monsoon buckets to drop millions of litres of sea water on the slip and out specialist abseilers had worked to remove loose material from the site. This work is ongoing.

Those flying over the corridor will see visible progress in coming weeks with work underway on all sections from Blue Duck Valley Road to north of Waipapa Bay. Access tracks have been built, slips are coming down and we're about to begin rebuilding sections of the damaged highway and Main North Line railway. We're making great progress.

With this ramping up of work, comes a big team on the ground. More than 400 people will live within the local community during the rebuild work, supporting the local economy through the traditionally quiet winter off-season. We have worked closely with local accommodation providers and the hospitality industry to find suitable facilities to house and feed our workers.

While this has been possible for our workers to date, it has become evident we will need to bring in a pre-fabricated accommodation facility from overseas, similar to those used for fly-in fly-out project sites to meet our future needs. We are working through the logistics of getting the facility shipped out, on-site and set-up, as well as finding a suitable location within the community.

This month we opened our site office at 73 Beach Road, Kaikōura, and look forward to welcoming you if you have any queries or want to get an update on any aspect of our work.

DUNCAN GIBB NCTIR's Project Director

HELPING A LOCAL BUSINESS FLOURISH

At more than 300 metres high and covered in layers of fractured rock and loose material, the large slips north of Kaikōura are an imposing sight, say the group of helicopter operators, working in conjunction with Kaikōura-based South Pacific Helicopters NZ to wash loose rock and debris off the slip faces.

The team has dropped more than 80 million litres of water on the slips, flying from the helibase at Mangamaunu where NCTIR has employed an air traffic controller to co-ordinate the chopper movements to and from site and other aircraft flying along the coast. The job remains challenging day in, day out.

Flying in these conditions can be tricky and keeping safe is critical, as Kaikōura pilot Daniel Stevenson knows well.

Daniel is part of a team of 14 helicopter pilots who have spent the last two months dropping nearly 80 million litres of water on the slips to the north of Kaikōura.

He has previously been involved in sluicing operations for other slips following heavy rain events, but says this work pales in comparison.

'These are obviously a lot larger and it's a much bigger job.'

For Daniel, being involved in the work has been a 'godsend' for his business following the earthquake.

Before the earthquake, Daniel ran whale watch tours, the sluicing work having helped to keep his business going. 'It has been a blessing.'

Daniel is pleased to give back to his community by carrying out this essential work.

'It's really cool; it's nice to be able to help and do something to get State Highway 1 open and Kaikōura moving again.'



Daniel Stevenson, South Pacific Helicopters NZ

KEEPING IT LOCAL

Work to clear slips north of Kaikōura is ramping up and local contractors are playing a major part.

Ford Brothers have been on the ground to the north since January, clearing access tracks past 300-metre high slips and bringing down the rock and debris.

This work has been vital to the success of the programme to date: NCTIR being on track to reopen State Highway 1 to full road and rail access by the end of the year.

Ford Brothers part owner Pete Ford says his team of 16 have been operating eight trucks, four excavators and three loaders on various works sites in the months following last November's earthquake.

'I'm proud of our workers, they've worked long hours and are the backbone of Ford Brothers.'

When the North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery

was established earlier this year, it was important for the alliance that local contractors played a big role in the repair and rebuild of the transport networks.

More than 30 local subcontractors have been involved, from helicopter sluicing pilots to operators like Ford Brothers working on the ground. This local contractor support has been vital for the operation.

Ford Brothers have been operating in Kaikōura for more than 60 years. The company played an essential role in the initial recovery effort clearing slips on State Highway 1 south of Kaikōura and are now working in the north.

Pete Ford says the company has employed extra staff to help with this work.

'The work is unprecedented. The slips are large but our crews are making good progress at bringing them down.'

'Having good gear helps, but good

workers are also essential and I'm lucky to have a great team behind me.'

Subcontractors that have the required machinery and experience who would like to join the NCTIR team, should send their expression of interest to: procurement@nctir.com



Ford Brothers excavator clearing a secondary slip around Site 2

PROGRESS ON THE GROUND

Earlier this month, the Rakautara residents had vehicle access restored to their homes for the first time since the earthquake, albeit restricted.

When our construction crews completed the access track around Site 2, residents were given restricted access along the track once rockfall testing was carried out to make sure it was safe enough for their vehicles.

Local resident Barry Campbell says he welcomed the independence the access track has given.

'It is great to be able to get vehicles in and out, instead of having to walk through the railway tunnel with a wheelbarrow full of groceries.'



NCTIR meeting with the local Rakautara residents

'We avoided going into town when it rained because we knew we would get wet, but now we can go to Kaikōura every day if we like.'

Mr Campbell says living between two of the large slips has meant the residents have seen the work in the north first-hand.

'NCTIR has worked really hard to get the road open, the scale of the damage has been immense. Living between the work sites means we can see what they are dealing with, these slips are huge.'

State Highway 1 and the Main North Line railway will reopen to full access by the end of December this year.



The construction access track around Site 2

SH1 SOUTH OF KAIKOURA OPENING HOURS CHANGING

The opening hours for State Highway 1 south of Kaikōura were reduced by an hour earlier this month and will continue to be reviewed as winter approaches.

The highway, from Peketa to Oaro, is now open each day from 7am to 8pm.

‘The change in sunrise hours at this time of year makes it more difficult for our contractors to see what is happening on the slip faces above the road in the early morning hours. In order to keep contractors and those travelling on the route safe, we need to open the road a little later,’ says the NZ Transport Agency’s Regional Performance Manager Pete Connors.

Crews are making good progress on work to fully restore SH1 south of Kaikōura, but Mr Connors reminded everyone that the road remained subject to closure at short notice in response to continuing seismic activity and weather events.

Anyone wanting to travel south to or from Kaikōura when SH1 is closed should use the Inland Road (Route 70). The journey between Waiiau and Kaikōura is slow, with 30 km/h speed restrictions in place at many sites and there being several work sites along the way.

Keep up-to-date with opening hours and any road closures on the website:

www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/kaikoura-earthquake-response

END OF LIFE FOR 80-YEAR-OLD RAILWAY BRIDGE



KiwiRail Bridge 90 as the demolition got underway

Plans are underway to build a new permanent bridge to replace KiwiRail Bridge 90, near Ferniehurst, in Hundalee, North Canterbury.

Earlier this month, after almost 80 years and millions of trips, KiwiRail Bridge 90 became the first major rail structure to be demolished, since the North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery alliance began earthquake repairs in January.

Site Manager Warrick Beard says the demolition went to plan.

‘The ‘nibbler’ quickly turned the bridge into rubble; we can now look at starting work to build a temporary bridge in its place.’

The temporary bridge is being built using steel spans on the existing foundations. This means KiwiRail will be able to re-open the Main North Line railway while work is still underway building a permanent bridge.

The line is a vital link in KiwiRail’s network that provides just-in-time services, shifting freight from the North Island via the Interislander ferries to Christchurch, and on to South Island customers.



KiwiRail Bridge 90 demolition completed

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES



Air Kaikoura manager, Murray Hamilton ready to take off from Parikawa to Kaikoura

While State Highway 1 north of Kaikōura and south of Clarence is being repaired, a local air club is helping the community stay connected.

Around 500 locals have flown between Kaikōura and Parikawa since Air Kaikoura launched the new service in early December.

Air Kaikōura Manager Murray Hamilton says Kaikōura Aero Club is a non-profit organisation run by members of the community.

‘We’re providing a lifeline for people to get between Clarence and Kaikōura.’

Clients have included hospital staff, insurance companies and even 20 people heading from Clarence to Christchurch for the Bruce Springsteen concert last month.

Beekeepers are major clients, flying two to three times a week to check on hives.

Mr Hamilton says the small airport is particularly busy Mondays and Fridays running at least four flights on these days. Other days flights are on demand, which is convenient for the locals.

‘We’re thrilled to be able to provide this service to support Kaikōura,’ says Mr Hamilton.

NCTIR has helped by installing a ‘terminal’ and portaloos for travellers to use at Parikawa.

Air Kaikōura is known for its whale watching flights, and while these are still continuing, the flights between Parikawa and Kaikōura are growing in demand.

Farmers have relied on the service to transport machinery, while the vet has used it to get crucial medical supplies in for their animals.

The company is growing, they’ve increased staff numbers and have purchased a fourth aircraft for the Parikawa service.

Flying the route means the locals are seeing the damage from the air first hand.

‘I was shocked the first time I saw the slips, completely blown away, thinking oh my goodness that’s just incredible,’ says Mr Hamilton.

Air Kaikōura is also hoping to expand its service to connect Blenheim, locals and tourists with Kaikōura. This is due to launch before winter.



The Air Kaikoura portacom terminal

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

As the new neighbour in the Kaikōura community, NCTIR was a sponsor of the Sound Foundation event that was held in February at the Pier Hotel. The free live music event created an opportunity to uplift the spirits of the people of Kaikōura and North Canterbury. Funds raised will be going towards the rebuild of the Kaikōura Community Pool which was badly damaged during the November earthquake.

The NCTIR team is keen to support the Kaikōura and North Canterbury communities, to ensure the success of the recovery and growth of the wider region.



