

KAIKOURA EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

WEEKLY BULLETIN - no. 13

21 April 2017

This weekly bulletin provides the latest information about the rebuild of road and rail networks damaged by the Hurunui/Kaikoura earthquake in November 2016. The bulletin is produced by the North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery (NCTIR) - an alliance representing the NZ Transport Agency and KiwiRail, on behalf of Government. We're keen to hear your questions about our work, or any feedback on this bulletin. Drop us a line via email at info@nctir.com or give us a call on 0800 NCTIREQ (0800 628 4737) - we'd like to hear from you.

THE COASTAL RAILWAY IS 'LIVE'

The rail corridor along the east coast between Waipara and Blenheim is now a construction zone so everyone should treat the Main North Line as 'live'. Although the rail network is not reinstated yet, work trains (carrying material and equipment to repair the line) began operating in the Ferniehurst area of north Canterbury this past week. Everyone is asked to take extra care around level crossings as work trains and hi-rail vehicles (trucks that go on rail) will be frequently moving up and down the line. Construction-related traffic volumes will also be increasing on roads.



MAKING SAFER SPEEDS PERMANENT

The NZ Transport Agency is currently consulting on proposals to permanently lower speed limits on sections of the alternate Picton to Christchurch route. The route goes through the Wairau Valley, St Arnaud, Murchison, over the Alps at Lewis Pass, through Hanmer Springs and on to Waipara, where it re-joins SH1.

The affected roads include parts of State Highways 6, 7, 63 and 65. The Transport Agency is also seeking views on the appropriate speed limit for a section of the Lower Buller Gorge road on SH6.

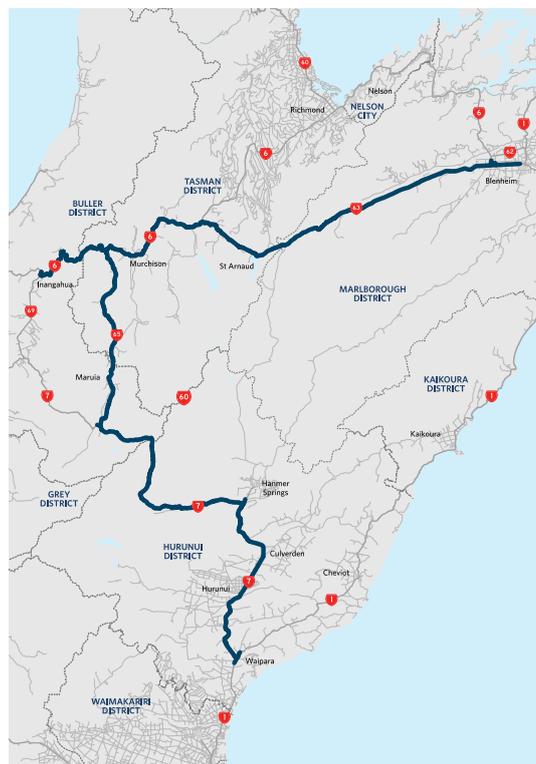
The alternate route is a scenic drive, but these roads were never intended to carry the volume of traffic now using them. To keep travellers and the communities living along the route safe, the Transport Agency used emergency provisions to introduce lower speed limits on critical sections of the route as part of a wide-ranging package of safety measures to manage the risks associated with increased traffic.

As the lower speed limits will legally expire soon, public consultation is underway to make the lower speed limits permanent.

While the proposed speed limits being consulted on will be permanent if implemented, the Transport Agency will continue to monitor the route once SH1 is restored, and if required, review speed limits again.

You can find out more and make a submission at www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/Picton-Christchurch-alternate-route-speed-limits You're welcome to give feedback on how the lower speed limits have been working.

Submissions close 5pm, Wednesday 3 May 2017.



SH1 SOUTH OF KAIKOURA

Cleaning up after ex-Cyclone Cook was this week’s priority. A new slip appeared near Rosy Morn, south of Peketa, at Easter weekend. Between 8,000 and 10,000 cubic metres of new material came down from the cliffs above. This sparked a major clean-up operation, with sluicing helicopters, seven trucks, three excavators and two loaders starting work immediately. Abseilers were also able to take advantage of the closure to carry out urgent scaling works along the coast.

This section of SH1 south of Kaikoura remains fragile and may remain prone to short-term closures for some time. There are electronic signs at Waipara advising if the state highway route is closed and another sign north of Cheviot. If people make it to Cheviot and find the state highway is closed, they can take the Leader Road to reconnect with the Inland Road (Route 70) at Waiau. For updates, visit the Transport Agency’s website at: www.nzta.govt.nz/kaikoura-earthquake-response

INLAND ROAD

The Inland Road (Route 70 via Waiau and Mt Lyford) has seen some bad weather over the past couple of weeks. This resulted in flooding of the Mason River, which affects the temporary road that was built to carry traffic around a large slip at Whales Back Saddle. To reduce future flooding, crews have been dredging the riverbed, clearing debris and investigating damaged culverts along the river. This area will remain a fragile section of the Inland Road that is susceptible to rainfall events, but slope stabilisation and rock fall mitigation work at the Whales Back slip is progressing well. When complete, traffic can use the original road again.



SH1 NORTH OF KAIKOURA

Road links north of Kaikoura to Picton remain closed. At Ohau Point (Site 6), excavators have continued to build the construction access track around the base of this massive slip. The excavators working from the north and south of this slip will meet in the middle in the next few weeks. The photo on the left was taken in February and shows the slip before work started; the photo on the right shows where the excavators are now.



Bulk earthworks to modify the rail and road alignment are underway south of Clarence and are progressing well. Archaeological and cultural monitoring will be carried out for the duration of the project in this coastal area. These photos show earthquake-damaged rail tracks (below left) and the same area now that repairs are underway.



MAIN NORTH LINE RAILWAY

In a project milestone, the earthquake-damaged rail line between Waipara and Ferniehurst in north Canterbury has been repaired enough to allow work trains to operate. This involves working on bridges, culverts and railway embankments that were extensively damaged November. The next phase of work in this area will be to replace and tamp the huge amount of ballast shaken loose during the quake.

Scaffolding has been erected at the new rail bridge near Ferniehurst (bridge 90); and new railway sleepers on the bridge have been installed. The crew's next task is to backfill the abutments so that new rail tracks can be installed. The original Ferniehurst rail bridge was severely damaged by the earthquake - these photos show the bridge site after its demolition and what it looks like now.



Even with last week's wet weather, work has started on the realignment of the rail track at Oaro.



KAIKOURA HARBOUR

Dredging of the outer harbour seabed is due to start over the next few weeks. This will be done using a tug boat, barges and a floating excavation platform. The equipment is similar to the image on the right, but there will be no silt curtain because it would significantly restrict access for commercial users of the harbour channel.



UPDATES ON LANDSLIDES

The land movements and shaking near Waiiau during the November earthquake were among the strongest ever recorded. In a blog published this past week, GeoNet director Ken Gledhill explains the science that is emerging five months after the quake and why the countryside remains very vulnerable to landslides.

Environment Canterbury and GNS Science continue to monitor landslide dams in northern Canterbury. While thousands of landslides have been identified and assessed, it is possible that new dams may continue to form - especially in the case of aftershocks and/or rainfall. People are therefore advised to keep away from all riverbeds in the areas affected by landslides in case there are any sudden releases of water.

You can read Geonet's blog here: <http://info.geonet.org.nz/blog/>

For further information about landslide dams, including maps, is available here:

<http://ecan.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=50f00d42e29c46b1a61b848440c5295a>

DRIVING TIPS FOR SCHOOL HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Over Easter weekend Police reported that people travelling between the top of the South Island and Christchurch (via Lewis Pass) were mostly patient, cautious and drove at safe speeds - but there were also some instances of unsafe overtaking and vehicles crossing the centre line on corners. It's important that drivers don't cross the centre line unless safely overtaking or turning off the road.

Here are some tips for safe travel over the school holidays:

- The roads on this route (State Highways 6, 7, 63 and 65) are challenging to drive - it is narrow and winding in many places, with single-lane bridges. For everyone's safety, adhere to all road signage and speed restrictions.
- It's important to drive to the conditions, which is not just about the weather. It also includes driving in an appropriate way for the road you're on, the vehicle you're in, the other traffic around you, and your level of experience.
- Don't drive when you're tired. Tired drivers react more slowly, make poor judgements, and find it harder to concentrate. Take regular breaks - there are rest stops with fuel, food, coffee and toilets at Culverden, Springs Junction, Murchison and St Arnaud.
- With the weather becoming changeable, be prepared for the unexpected: have food, water, warm clothing and bedding in your vehicle. If the weather forecast is poor, only drive if you have to.
- Roads will continue to be busy until the end of the month. Expect road works and allow extra time; on average the trip takes about seven and a half hours.
- While it can be frustrating when you're stuck behind a slower vehicle, only overtake when it's safe to complete the entire manoeuvre. This should be on a straight stretch of road, with no solid yellow line on your side of the centre line. You need to be able to see that the road ahead will remain clear for 100m throughout the entire manoeuvre.
- If you have a queue of traffic behind you, find a safe place to pull over and let other vehicles pass. This prevents drivers becoming frustrated and making poor decisions.

Before you travel, visit: www.nzta.govt.nz/kaikoura-earthquake-response. This website provides information to help you plan your trip and provides real-time travel updates.

KEEP UP-TO-DATE

How to contact us and keep up to date with the NCTIR project:

- Subscribe to receive our weekly bulletin by emailing info@nctir.com, with 'Bulletin' in the subject line.
- Visit our website: www.nzta.govt.nz/kaikoura-earthquake-response
- Call our Freephone: 0800 NCTIR EQ (0800 628 4737)
- Email us if you have a question: info@nctir.com
- Attending one of the community meetings, keep an eye on your local newspapers.
- Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/nztasouthisland/ or www.facebook.com/kiwirailNewZealand/
- For travel information: <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/regions/11>

SH1 Kaikōura Coast remedial works

