Coastal Pacific returns for the season
The Coastal Pacific has returned for its 2019-2020 season, and passenger Anne Coulston and her brother Peter spent a lovely sunny day in Kaikōura, getting off the train in the morning and leaving late afternoon. Anne says everyone was friendly, and they enjoyed chatting with locals and visiting the shops. “We had fish and chips for lunch, and Poppy’s famous ice cream. It was a lovely relaxing time – no rushing, as we had the whole day.”

On track at Half Moon Bay and Jacob’s Ladder
Two rail projects north of Kaikōura have passed important milestones, with a new tunnel/culvert installed at Jacob’s Ladder and a permanent rail bridge at Debris Flow Bridge 115b finished in time for the Coastal Pacific passenger train to restart its 2019-2020 season.

Crews at Jacob’s Ladder are now working to remove 50,000m3 of material to form a debris flow catchment basin behind SH1. Around 10,000m3 of this material is being filtered and recycled into a permanent earth bund to direct the flow of debris into the catchment basin during any future weather events. A new 4x4x30m tunnel/culvert has been installed under the road and rail to allow easy access for the dump trucks that are removing material. The traffic diversion around Jacob’s Ladder is expected to remain until November, when SH1 is reinstated there.

Approximately three months’ work remains at 115b, with retaining walls to be constructed, and a concrete-lined debris flow channel formed beneath the road and rail.
North and South rail tunnel extensions

Work is ramping up at Tunnel 19 (south of Ōhau Point) and Tunnel 11 (between Paratitahi & Raramai Tunnel) while crews extend both rail tunnels as a rockfall protection measure. See below for an example of the work at Tunnel 11.

Rock fence and shotcrete concrete to protect workers from rockfall and slips. Lower slope has no shotcrete due to the solid rock face with no risk of slips.

An ‘L’ unit being lifted into place. Two ‘L’ units make a ‘U’ section. By the end of November a total of 28 ‘U’ sections will be installed.

220 tonne crane set up to lift the concrete ‘L’ units into place.

Very narrow work space on side of road which requires one-way traffic flow.

220 tonne crane set up to lift the concrete ‘L’ units into place.

Extension progress

Traffic impact of Tunnel 11 work

A one-way traffic lane is currently in place around the Tunnel 11 site (between the Paratitahi and Raramai tunnels), and will remain until April 2020. This allows for a 220 tonne crane to extend the southern end of the rail tunnel.

While each of the tunnel sections are delivered and installed, there will be a number of 5 – 10 minute traffic holds. There will be no stops between 9:30am and midday while the train runs. This work is expected to complete in early November. Some less frequent traffic holds will continue into April 2020 while crews finish installing rock anchors, drilling and backfilling work.

We apologise for the inconvenience and thank everyone for their ongoing patience.