

---

# Manawatū Gorge update

Manawatū Gorge update - no. 1  
19 July 2017

This update provides the latest information about the Manawatū Gorge closure since slips caused damage on 24 April 2017. This update is produced by the NZ Transport Agency. To register for future updates please email: [manawatugorge@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:manawatugorge@nzta.govt.nz)

We're also keen to hear your questions or any feedback about our work. Drop us a line via email at [manawatugorge@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:manawatugorge@nzta.govt.nz) or call us on 0800 4 HIGHWAYS - we'd like to hear from you.

## CURRENT SITUATION (AS AT 19 JULY 2017)

There is a slip known as the 'Anzac' slip 6.4km from the Woodville end of the Gorge and another slip at 'Kerry's Wall' 4.5km from the Ashhurst turnoff on SH3.

Continued instability at the slip sites is hampering efforts to make the road safe adding to the complexity of the work. Safety of all road users is our number one priority.

Geotechnical engineers recently confirmed a large area above the Kerry's Wall rock face is highly unstable with the entire hillside moving. The rate of movement indicates a slip as large or larger than the 2011 slip, which closed the road for 14 months, could come down at any time.

As a result the Transport Agency has removed all contractors from the current work sites for safety reasons. Those same risks mean the road cannot be safely re-opened for motorists.

Until the movement of the hillside at Kerry's Wall slows or stops, our contractors are unable to complete their repairs. Geotechnical engineers are monitoring the site and recording movement in the hillside. This monitoring is needed in order to make an informed decision about the future of the Gorge.

## MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

### Improving alternative routes via Ashhurst and Woodville

The Transport Agency is working to address the following concerns raised by local community members:

#### Ashhurst

- Short-term bypass
- Strengthening the rail overbridge
- Traffic calming and speed management.

#### Woodville

- Improving signage to Woodville
- Better connectivity back to SH3
- Availability of SH3 to Gorge Road.

## Saddle Road and Pahiatua Track maintenance

Saddle Road has been the primary alternative route while the Gorge has been closed. The other alternative route is the Pahiatua Track. Given the increased traffic and associated wear and tear on both these roads, the Transport Agency has taken over their maintenance and management.

On Saturday 15 July contractors began urgent heavy maintenance works on Saddle Road. The following restrictions are in place from 9am to 3pm:

- West to East traffic (Ashhurst to Woodville) – single lane traffic on Saddle Road
- East to West traffic (Woodville to Ashhurst) – detour over Pahiatua Track

This work may take up to three weeks (until the second week of August).

## WORKING ON A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

The Transport Agency is commissioning a detailed business case process to explore all of the options available to provide a long term, resilient and safe connection through the Ruahine/Tararua Ranges. This process will consider a range of options including, but not limited to, the options covered in the 2012 report (commissioned by the NZ Transport Agency – and available on our website) which identified options to bypass or replace the current Manawatū Gorge route. The detailed business case will then recommend the long term alternative to the current Manawatū Gorge road.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

To stay updated or provide us with information please:

- Visit our website: [www.nzta.govt.nz/manawatu-gorge](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/manawatu-gorge)
- Email: [manawatugorge@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:manawatugorge@nzta.govt.nz)
- Tweet: @NZTACNI
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/nztacni](http://www.facebook.com/nztacni)
- Call: 0800 4 HIGHWAYS