

KAIKOURA EARTHQUAKE UPDATE – 20 December 2016



Welcome to the first of our regular newsletters to keep you better informed about what we're doing to get the roads into Kaikoura open.

Since last month's earthquake our efforts have been focused on getting the roads from the south re-opened because these sustained less damage and it was easier to get access, in particular for emergency services and supplies in the first few days after the earthquake.

Yesterday (19 December) we re-opened the inland Route 70, between Waiau and Kaikoura. This is to two-way, unrestricted 24/7 access. Our teams have been working 12-hour days, seven days a week – more than 14,000 man hours in the last month - to ensure this road re-opened in time for the Christmas holiday season. They have removed more than 10,000 cubic metres of rock and material from the various slips along the route – about 1400 truckloads. Some of this rock and material was around the Whalesback area and has been used to build the bypass route.

The Inland Route 70 remains fragile and hazardous; there is still a significant amount of work to be done and this will continue into the New Year to improve road conditions and safety.

Heavy rain or further seismic activity could result in temporary closures throughout the holiday but our teams will be on hand and working throughout, apart from the statutory holidays. Before you travel, we recommend you check our travel information pages: <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic-and-travel-information/> for the latest on road conditions.

Tomorrow afternoon (21 December) we expect to re-open State Highway 1 to the south of Kaikoura to two-way access but this will be with night-time restrictions until all slip faces have been stabilised and we can get traffic signals installed along a 1km coastal section of the route where we have single-lane access only. Access will initially be during daylight hours, 6am to 8pm. The last vehicles will be admitted to travel along SH1 south from Peketa at 7.30pm. Vehicles travelling from Christchurch are advised to leave the city by 5.30pm to ensure they get through to Kaikoura before the road closes at Oaro at 7.15pm.

In clearing the 26 slips from Oaro to Kaikoura, we have removed more than 50,000 cubic metres of rock and material from SH1. This material has been stockpiled along the highway for potential future use. We've had helicopters working to sluice the slip faces, as well as abseilers on site manually removing loose rock and material to enable safe clearance of the slips. Temporary bunds, using large rocks and material, as well as shipping containers have been built or positioned along the highway to stop any loose debris washing off the slip faces onto the highway. A temporary rail crossing has been constructed at Oaro to bypass the damaged rail overbridge. Work will begin in the New Year to repair the overbridge.



Further south, between Oaro and Cheviot, considerable work has been done to clear slips, repair cracks and holes in the road; rebuild, stabilise and reseal damaged sections of the highway; and repair culverts to get the highway re-opened. Again, work will continue in the New Year to make permanent repairs to areas which have been made safe but need further work.

When travelling on both SH1 south of Kaikoura and along the Inland Route 70, everyone is asked to take extra care, be prepared for delays as we continue repair work and to strictly adhere to all signage and speed restrictions. In particular, everyone must observe the no stopping signs, these are in place for your safety. We will continue to monitor both routes throughout the holiday season to ensure the safety of everyone using these.

With these two routes re-opened, our focus has shifted to the north to advance work on this section of State Highway 1. Since the earthquake, we have had our teams of engineers and geotechnical specialists assessing the slips and considering options to remove these, repair the road and better protect the corridor in the event of a future natural or seismic event. Helicopter sluicing is underway, we have completed aerial mapping of the highway corridor in preparation for finalising the design and we're working through the heritage and cultural issues with the local rununga before we begin to clear the slips.

With the passing of emergency legislation through Parliament last week, which will cut through red tape, and ensure repairs can be accelerated, as well as the government's commitment to reinstate the coastal route to the north and south of Kaikoura at a cost of \$1.4 billion to \$2 billion, our teams will begin in full force in the New Year to rebuild the highway and rail corridor and improve both the safety and resilience of the route. We're confident that limited access via this coastal route will be restored within the next 12 months.

We thank you for your patience while we get work underway to re-open this northern section of the highway. We understand your frustrations but we are dealing with some significant volumes of material and level of complexity with these slips which means it will take time to reinstate access.

To ensure we keep everyone up-to-date with the work programme and latest developments, we plan to send out these regular newsletters and encourage you to share these with your neighbours and community and get everyone to sign up to receive these at: KaikouraEQcomms@nzta.govt.nz

If you have any queries about the work or what is happening, please do not hesitate to contact us at the above email address.



For general enquiries or contact information about the NZ Transport Agency please check our website www.nzta.govt.nz or email us at info@nzta.govt.nz