

MINO-490 State Highway 6 closure for emergency works

14 October 2022

Providing information to the Associate Minister's office on the closure of State Highway 6 (SH6) for urgent maintenance works over the next six to eight weeks.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

Situation, decision taken, and opportunity to open road periodically

- Following the August 2022 weather event, significant emergency repairs are required between Blenheim and Nelson on SH6.
- The road needs significant cutting out and rebuilding for the five worst sites. This means the road will become too narrow to allow people to pass through safely while we have crews and equipment in place.
- We have looked at multiple ways to do this work while minimising disruption for people. Alternative options would have led to 24-30 weeks of work and longer overall travel delays.
- At times it will be impossible to open the road for intervals during the day or night due to the road's narrowness and the work that needs to happen at the base of the slips. During the work, the crew will be up to six metres below the current road level and accessing the site from each side. While this is being done, there will be no road to drive on. At other times, it will also be logistically challenging and add significantly more time to the closure if we were to regularly move the crew and equipment so that people could safely pass.
- The route is currently highly vulnerable to damage should another severe weather event occur. If this were to happen, the road could end up being closed for months. This is why we are doing a full closure and getting the repairs done as soon as possible. Our approach reduces the overall impact on the public and gets the work done before the busy Christmas season. The works are expected to be finished by 18 December 2022.

Examples of similar emergency works

- It is not uncommon for roads to close to allow emergency works to be undertaken due to climate events.
- Other examples of major road closures with residents in the middle of closure points have been the Kaikoura Recovery Project, which closed SH1 both north and south of Kaikoura.
- We had residents south of Kaikoura that worked in Kaikoura and needed supplies from Kaikoura. We worked with the community to establish key times of days, so they could come in and out of the closure point. A common schedule was once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Communication with and support for residents on Kokorua Rd

- Residents will not be cut off, we are contacting and working with residents closely to understand their access needs and determine how we will be able to provide tailored restricted access through the construction sites, or via alternative forestry routes as best we can.

- Teams have been contacting residents since the beginning of this week and a community meeting was carried out on 13 October 2022 with a substantial number of residents in attendance.
- Alongside the work to contact and understand the need of each of the Kokoroa Road households, the team is identifying a range of options to provide alternative access (including for emergency situations). Once we have confirmed the suitability of these options (expected to be later next week), we will be discussing these with the residents and doing our best to keep them connected until the repairs are completed.
- Communications with the local community and impacted residents were not undertaken earlier as there was a push to complete the design work and make a decision that allowed the road to be opened before the Christmas period. Local authorities were kept informed throughout the process.

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