

# MIN-3991 State Highway 6 road closure

18 October 2022

Response to questions from Minister McAnulty on the upcoming State Highway 6 (SH6) road closure and key messages.

## Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

### *Length and cost to road users of closure*

- The engineering team consider a full closure of at least 2 to 3 weeks would be necessary to construct temporary works to enable traffic to pass the site. Given the narrowness and steepness of the sites during construction, traffic still could not pass works under STOP/GO operations.
- Alternatively, a partial daytime closure, after the initial 2-to-3-week full closure would likely permit limited access, probably once in the morning and once in the evening. Each opening would require around two hours loss of construction time to make the site safe, establish traffic management, allow traffic to pass, take down traffic management, and re-establish the construction site. Given loss of productivity it is expected using this management method would extend the overall construction period to 24-30 weeks.
- Generic vehicle operating and travel time costs have been assessed for the 7-week full closure and the 24-30 week full/partial closure scenario outlined above. The calculation for the 24-30 week option indicate additional vehicle operating and travel time costs in the region of \$7.5 million over the \$15 million calculated for the full closure option.
- Construction cost estimates between the 2 options haven't been assessed as construction methodology would likely be different, but it is expected to be of a significant difference.
- In addition to traffic diversion and construction costs, a key factor in selecting the urgent road closure option is the risk of further carriageway collapse should the works not commence until the end of the summer. Waka Kotahi understands that some of the more impacted road users may be accepting of the longer-term scenario, but that comes with an increased risk of a prolonged unplanned closure from future weather events, which would have greater impacts to all users should that risk eventuate.
- Our contractors are gearing up for the emergency works construction period. It is expected there will be around 100 to 150 workers each day over the five construction sites, plus additional workers on the other maintenance work being bought into the closure period and additional resilience works.
- It is expected work will be undertaken during daylight hours, with some works undertaken at night, but the sites will not be continuously running 24/7.

### *Engagement with local authorities, residents and interested parties*

- Kokoroa Road/Whangamoā residents between the two work sites will not have road access to Nelson or Blenheim on SH6 during the full closure – however 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. We are currently working with forestry companies to determine convoyed access options, and the logistics of how we could make that work for those residents residing within the work sites. The latest discussions have suggested that forestry routes access will be available towards Nelson only, and not towards the Rai township.

- Residents and businesses outside the closure zone are also impacted (for example, Rai Valley, Okiwi Bay, Cable Bay), but will have access to the open sections of SH6 and the SH63 alternative route – although for some people, the length of the alternative route will provide challenges.
- Waka Kotahi is not in the position to provide compensation for road closures or maintenance work. It is understood that people in Nelson can apply for the Mayoral relief fund, and Marlborough is considering if that is an option for their impacted residents.
- Waka Kotahi has engaged with local councils, emergency services, freight operators, Fonterra, Nelson Civil Defence, Marlborough Civil Defence, Ministry of Primary Industries, and with residents within the construction sites since the plan was announced.
- Waka Kotahi informed the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough Mayors and council CEOs. The leaders accepted the need for these repairs and understood the need to undertake the repairs under urgency, acknowledging the impacts on some parts of the community. They also identified that the Kokoroa Road residents would be particularly impacted, as would other residents and businesses in areas adjacent to the closure who rely on the affected section of SH6.

#### *Alternative route*

- The alternative route between Blenheim and Nelson is SH63, and then north on SH6 from Kawatiri.
- Renwick to Nelson via SH63/SH6 will take an additional 54 mins (2.32 minutes vs 1.38). From the Rai Valley to Nelson will take an additional 2hr 21 mins via SH63/SH6 (3.14 minutes vs 53).
- An option exists to travel on local roads from St Arnaud, reducing travel time impacts by 30mins although we are not advertising this option as it is less safe and less suited to the higher traffic volumes and all vehicle types.
- All road users will be able to use the alternative route.

#### **Key Messages**

- These are emergency works in response to a very significant event. The road remains very vulnerable to further damage (rain last week further eroded the sites) and providing resilient repairs to avoid losing the route to damage is a priority
- We are still working with the impacted residents and businesses to understand their needs, and to provide options for managed access during the closure. We are looking at options for delivering to residents (food, meds, etc), for providing options for people to move in and out, and options for vehicles – but until we have confirmed both the needs that people have and the options, we will not be able to publicly outline these options