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## MINO-582 Northland update

2 February 2023

This note provides an update on transport issues in Northland, with a focus on Mangamuka Gorge, pothole repairs and investment in the region.

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### Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

#### Investment in Northland

A total of \$658 million is forecast to be invested in Northland during the 2021–24 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) period. This includes:

- \$386 million forecast maintenance and operations
- \$15 million forecast public transport investment
- \$38 million forecast cycling and walking investment
- \$52 million forecast Road to Zero investment
- \$19 million forecast Provincial Growth Fund
- \$28 million forecast NZ Upgrade Programme.

The enclosed map shows some of the major work underway.

#### Mangamuka Gorge update

In December 2022 Waka Kotahi confirmed it had secured \$100 million of funding to restore State Highway 1 Mangamuka Gorge to its original condition. This work will be delivered in phases. Firstly, protecting the road from further damage, which involves emergency works within the gorge as well as improvements to State Highway 10 to ensure it is operating safely and efficiently.

Secondly, restoring the road to fix the slips and return it to its original condition; then finally, investigating how the road can be improved and futureproofed to ensure the Far North roading network can withstand weather events in the future.

#### Latest

- With the current weather situation in Northland, Waka Kotahi has paused work on State Highway 1 Mangamuka Gorge to ensure the safety of crews. Work will resume by Friday 3 February 2023 if weather allows.
- While the Mangamuka Gorge has received a lot of rain and is still active, the protection work carried out since late last year means the slips have held up well and there has been no major additional movement.
- With \$100 million funding now confirmed, protection work and planning for pre-construction and slip repairs in the Mangamuka Gorge is currently full steam ahead.



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- Over the past couple of months, we have been carrying out emergency work to protect the road from further damage, as well as work on State Highway 10 to ensure the official detour route is operating as efficiently as possible.
- As there is still some movement within the gorge, our crews have strict health and safety protocols in place to protect workers and ensure everyone gets home safely to their loved ones at the end of the day.
- Planning for the next steps, including pre-construction work and detailed design for the slip repairs, is well underway.
- We are also working through procurement, further investigations, and sourcing of materials now so that we can start work as quickly as possible once the detailed design process has been completed.
- We have engaged with key contractors, and they are in the process of mobilising the resources envisaged to complete the slip repairs.
- We will have further information to share on the timeline for re-opening SH1 Mangamuka Gorge by March this year.
- We are nearing completion on some of the protection work within the Mangamuka Gorge to prevent further movement of slips, which will help us to more accurately plan how they'll be fixed.
- Some of the work our crews have been carrying out since before Christmas includes:
  - Crack sealing to keep rainwater out and prevent the cracks from getting any bigger
  - Installing bunds around some of the bigger slips to divert rainfall away from them
  - Drainage work including clearing existing swale drains, constructing manholes and culverts under the road to collect the rainwater running off the hillside, rather than the water sheeting across the road
  - Clearing overslip debris and stabilisation work to ensure no further debris falls from the hillside.

#### *Next steps*

Before we begin construction on the slip repairs, we need to ensure the gorge is safe and stable enough to accommodate the large machinery needed. This means we need to carry out some pre-construction work such as installing piles, stabilising the road throughout the site as well as retaining and strengthening areas so we'll be ready to bring in the equipment needed to carry out the slip repairs once design work is completed.

It's important to us that we carry out the work we can now, so we are ready to start slip repair work as soon as possible.



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## Maintenance

Since the beginning of 2017, Waka Kotahi contractors have repaired more than 23,000 potholes in Northland, with more than 6,500 potholes repaired in 2022 alone.

Maintenance activity undertaken in Northland during 2021/22:

- Rehabilitation (completely rebuilding the road) – 7.3 lane kms
- Resurfacing (replacing asphalt) – 18.7 lane kms
- Resealing (adding new layer of chipseal) – 135.2 lane kms
- SCRIM resealing (improving skid resistance) – 14.8 lane kms
- Total state highway network renewed – 8.8 percent
- Total state highway maintenance spend – \$53,837,473.

Planned maintenance for 2022/23:

- Rehabilitations – 3
- Resurfacing – 33.9km
- Resealing – 365.1km
- Percentage of network to be renewed – 11 percent
- Total state highway spend – \$106.1 million.

## Project updates

- **SH1 Loop Road safety improvements** - The new two-lane roundabout and a second bridge for southbound traffic will improve safety and access at the Loop Road and SH1 intersection. Stage one was completed last year, with road resurfacing and traffic island installation completed in late 2022. Stage two of the project is currently scheduled to early 2023.
- **SH10 Kāeo Bridge upgrade** - Work is progressing on the new two-lane bridge across the Kāeo River and roundabout to improve traffic flow and safety along SH10. Preparation work is completed on the north side of the bridge, a temporary road has been installed around the worksite and the embankment on the Kāeo side reinforced.
- **Ara Tūhono – Pūhoi to Warkworth** - The first, southern, stage of Ara Tūhono - Pūhoi to Warkworth was opened in May 2022. Waka Kotahi, NX2 and Fletcher/Acciona are working to complete the project as soon as possible, with the opening the Pūhoi to Warkworth motorway next year. The 18.5-kilometre motorway will provide a safer, more resilient and reliable route for motorists travelling between Auckland and Northland.
- **SH1 Dome Valley** - The safety improvements project on SH1 between Wellsford and Warkworth through the Dome Valley has nearly completed four of its proposed stages. The fifth and final stage is currently being redesigned. Safety features along the highway now include side and median barriers, wider road shoulders and centre lines, improved sight lines, right turn bays, and new drainage and culverts.



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In early December 2022, chip sea seal resealing work on SH1, Dome Valley, resulted in a visible failure that was covered by media. The chip seal site work had been completed earlier in the week prior to the event but, following heavy rain, the chip began being lost from the pavement surface. A decision was made to asphalt and complete works, however humid weather caused the surface to bleed (melt) before that could take place, causing the seal to lift off and stick to vehicle tyres. Contractor Fulton Hogan undertook urgent remedial work, and the road was closed overnight to allow for cleaning and clearing of the loose chip in preparation for asphaltting works. Waka Kotahi has encouraged anyone who received damage to their vehicle as a result of this issue to lodge a compensation claim with Fulton Hogan.

- **SH1 Whangārei to Port Marsden Highway safety improvements** - The Government asked Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail to deliver a new option for Northland that focuses on safety improvements along the existing state highway, and the construction of a new rail line to Northport.

The outcomes sought for the Northland Package include safety improvements on SH1 and mode shift and economic growth by moving freight more efficiently by rail, in line with Government decarbonisation objectives. Waka Kotahi has completed a business case for the safety improvements and submitted it to Ministers for approval. The work we have done shows that at a minimum what is needed is centre median barriers in the rural section, intersection improvements, traffic signals and provisions for walking and cycling in urban Whangārei.

While we await a decision from Joint Ministers on the project, Waka Kotahi is focusing on identifying how the safety upgrades will be delivered. This includes procurement planning, identifying what consents will be required and the timings for delivery.

We are also looking at the potential to start work as quickly as possible in areas where consents are not needed subject to approvals, we will then carry out community and landowner engagement.

- **SH1 Whangārei to Wellsford** - Works will soon begin on the first stage of this project, covering 83kms of SH1. Safety improvements will include side and median barriers, wider road shoulders and centre lines, right turn bays, turnaround facilities and a new roundabout near Waipū township.
- **SH1 Auckland to Whangārei** - This connection provides an essential lifeline to Northland and is critical to supporting economic and social outcomes in the region. Over the past few months critical State Highways have been closed, isolating Northland and communities and stranding freight. There is a heightened political interest as Northland leaders seek a resilient and safe connection north. This is compounded by a perceived underspend in Northland. These closures include:
  - SH1 Puhoi (will be resolved with the opening of the Puhoi to Warkworth new motorway)
  - SH1 Brynderwyn Hill. Closed multiple times for long periods causing lengthy detours for freight and vehicles
  - SH16 (alternate route to State Highway 1) due to flooding.
- **SH1 Far North Resilience Programme** - With the significant impact that the August 2022 closure of the SH1 Mangamuka Gorge corridor is having on the Far North communities, there is a high level of political, media and community interest. \$100 million NLTP funding has been secured to restore SH1 Mangamuka Gorge to its original condition.



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Detailed design work is being accelerated, which will enable the slip repair cost and construction methodology to be confirmed. This work will confirm a timeframe for reopening the road. We are continuing to collaborate with community representatives, members of the freight industry and hapū about decisions on next steps. We expect to have a better idea on a timeframe for re-opening the gorge by March 2023.

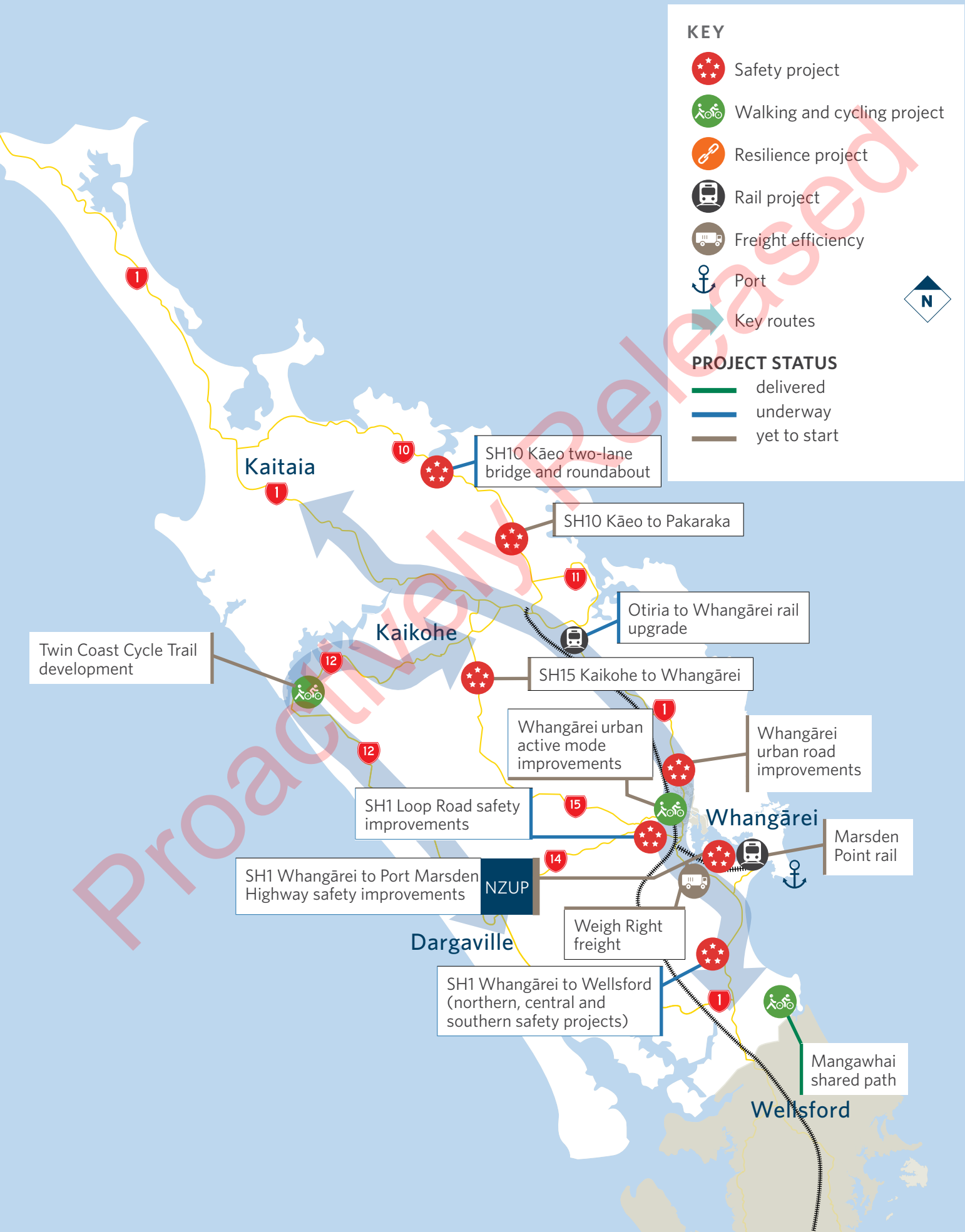
- **Driver Licences** - There continues ongoing high interest in driver licence access and equity. We are working on a regional approach where our people, regional MSD, iwi, community groups and councils all have a say in the development of, and therefore ownership of, a regional plan to address local issues in the short- to medium-term for the improvement of driver license access and equity.

#### Northland weather update

- The State Highway Network in Northland has fully re-opened, however, State Highway 1 Brynderwyn to Waipu remains closed from the State Highway 12 intersection. While the slips have been cleared, there is a further risk of additional slips.
- Light vehicles can use an alternative route through Kaiwaka and Mangawhai until further notice. Heavy vehicles can use State Highway 12 & State Highway 14.

# Te Tai Tokerau Northland

## key projects 2021-24



## Transport factsheet/information

### Land transport overview for Te Tai Tokerau Northland

- Te Tai Tokerau is a diverse region. Connecting the people to the whenua and moana is of high importance to the region and transport has a key role to play in maintaining these connections. The population is dispersed over a vast geographical area, with 51% of the population living in rural areas, which means car dependency is high.
- The new Northland mayoral cohort have publicly stated that the Government needs to do more to support economic growth by putting more money into state highways and local roads across Northland.

### Land transport investment

- Waka Kotahi invests in land transport infrastructure and services through the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). The NLTP is a three-year programme that sets out how Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, working with its partners, plans to invest the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) to create a safer, more accessible, better connected and more resilient land transport system that keeps New Zealand moving.
- Attached is a Te Tai Tokerau Northland: key projects 2021-24 map showing investment in projects in the wider region, including progress.
- Waka Kotahi is committed to ensuring the safety of state highways in Northland and is making significant investments in the region.
  - A total of \$751 million is forecast to be invested in Northland in the 2021–24 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) period, including \$344 million forecast maintenance and operations.
- Northland has received a significant jump in investment in the state highway maintenance and renewal works programmes. This is detailed in the table below.

Northland State Highway Maintenance and Renewal Works Investment

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Northland investment	\$37,115,881	\$36,838,881	\$31,967,929	\$29,643,357	\$50,752,336

- Significant investments are also being made to improve the safety of state highways in Northland. The regional package of the New Zealand Upgrade Programme in Northland includes a \$21.5 million upgrade to high-risk intersections at Kawakawa, Puketona and Rawene, with significant safety benefits including improved visibility, safer speeds and reduced congestion. All three intersection upgrades are now complete. Improvements to the SH1 and Loop Road intersection to make it safer and easier to use. This is part of the important strategic link between Auckland and Whangārei. The SH10 Kāeo Bridge upgrade project includes a new two-lane bridge and roundabout at the intersection of SH10 and Whangaroa Road that will improve safety and traffic flow.
- Ara Tūhono – the Pūhoi to Warkworth motorway is being built to the highest safety standards in New Zealand, and will open in 2023. It will connect to SH1 through the Dome Valley where a \$67 million safety improvement project includes centreline wire rope barriers, turning bays, and road widening to prevent serious crashes.
  - The Dome Valley section of SH1 had a sealing issue shortly after opening and was repaired during additional overnight closures.

### ***Condition of State Highway Network in Northland***

- Recent destructive storm events in Northland have highlighted the scale of damage resulting from extreme weather events and the challenges in keeping essential lifelines open for communities. These extreme events are happening at a pace and scale beyond previous forecasts.
- This includes the recent Cyclone Hale weather event that brought large scale flooding and slips to Northland. State Highway 1 was reduced to a single lane under stop/go traffic management while slips were cleared at Brynderwyns.
- The state highway network is experiencing an unprecedented increase in travel demand (especially from heavy vehicles) and is facing increasingly severe weather events due to climate change. At the same time, input costs for labour and material have substantially increased, while industry capability and capacity are constrained. The freight model from Te Manatū Waka – Ministry of Transport shows that the upper North Island freight task has grown substantially and is expected to keep growing to a 45 percent increase from a base in 2018 to 2033.
- There continues to be a high level of interest in the condition of the Northland network and the perception that there is severe under funding. We are not meeting the standard of the network that the people of Te Tai Tokerau expect.
- We are aware there has been a noticeable increase in potholes on sections of the state highway network and have invested \$18.6 million across Northland and north Auckland during the Spring maintenance season.

### ***Mangamuka George closure***

- There is a very high level of interest in the closure of the Mangamuka Gorge along State Highway 1 (SH1) caused by heavy rain over August 2022 causing several slips. The resilience of the network is a challenge for Northland – disruption like this means line haul can't get fruit, fish, forestry or flowers out of the region to Auckland and beyond. The route only reopened 17 months ago after a 12 month closure, and the detour through State Highway 10 adds up to 40 minutes to the journey.
- This has caused significant disturbance for the community and impacts their ability to access important health, work, and community services. It has been highlighted by the current Northland mayoral cohort as being an example of government underinvesting in Northland.
- The slips that were repaired following storm damage in 2021 have held up well, but following the 2022 storm event there are now six slips underneath the road (which have forced the closure) at different locations. Slips in the gorge are still moving and highly unstable and there are about 18 slips in total of which 15 are under the road and three are covering the road. The earth is brittle and unstable and heavy rain could bring down more of the hillside. There is also an historic slip directly above the road that is complicating repair efforts.
- The soil in the area is generally soft and unstable to begin with, which makes the stability of the land in the gorge particularly susceptible to the effects of severe weather, including heavier rainstorm events.
- In December, Waka Kotahi secured \$100 million of funding to restore this section of State Highway 1 to its original condition.
- Once this is complete, the third stage of this work will be focused on making the route more resilient.

### ***Whangārei to Port Marsden highway***

- The New Zealand Upgrade Programme (NZUP) originally included the four laning of the Whangārei to Port Marsden highway as a project for investment, however as NZUP costs increased by approximately \$6 billion, funding for several projects had to be rescope or cancelled.



- In place of funding for the highway, Government did make a commitment to fund a new rail link to Northport and target major safety upgrades to State Highway 1.
- The decision to remove the Whangārei to Port Marsden highway from NZUP was not received positively by the council or community. This was particularly difficult for the community because they had recently participated in engagement with officials about the new highway corridor.
- The Marsden Point rail spur will be a strategic investment in Northland's future prosperity, getting heavy trucks off the road to make the highway safer, and reduce emissions. Safety on State Highway 1 is a concern for locals, which is why funding has been targeted for safety upgrades, including median barriers, along the route.

### **Road Safety**

- **Northland Speed Review:** A 2018 New Zealand AA Research Foundation study found that in about 70 percent of crashes where people were seriously injured, drivers had generally followed the road rules.
  - Northland was the first region in New Zealand where we conducted a regional programme of speed reviews – the goal of this was to simplify the process and prevent consultation fatigue which was being created by going corridor by corridor, which has been the general approach as we target corridors based on highest risk.
  - There are concerns in Northland regarding our approach to speed reduction rather than investing in improving infrastructure and this is also being linked to perceived low levels of maintenance investment.
  - In Northland, we have already reviewed speed limits on SH11 from Puketona to Paihia and SH1 from Moerewa to Kawakawa, setting safer speed limits on these roads in 2020. We also implemented speed limits for SH10 Awanui-Kaingaroa in 2021.
  - In 2022, we formally consulted on safer speeds for schools, marae and townships on the state highways. Since then, we are responding to community and stakeholder feedback from public consultation where there is support for reduced speed in places where there are schools, preschools and a high number of people who walk or cycle.
  - Local roads in Northland are also being reviewed to check that their speed limits are safe and appropriate.
- **Improving road safety outcomes with Māori:** Waka Kotahi wants to achieve better road safety outcomes with Māori.
  - To enable the change, we've started the Improving Road Safety with Māori project under Te Ara Ki te Ora (Road to Zero). The He Pūrongo Whakahaumarū Huarahi Mō Ngā Iwi Māori – Māori road safety outcomes report has been produced to help people understand where we are starting from and the data limitations that currently exist.
  - The Improving Road Safety with Māori project team will work with Māori to hear more about the key challenges facing their people. We will do this initially in two regions, including Te Tai Tokerau, by taking a listen first approach before we partner to develop a way forward.
  - The next steps in this journey may take time, but we are committed to doing better for Māori, making sure people are getting home safe to their whānau, hapū, iwi and hapori community

### **Driver licensing**

- The average wait time during July 2022 for the next available testing slots for full and restricted driver licensing tests at VTNZ Kaitiāia was 52 and 62 days respectively.

- Waka Kotahi expects customers to be able to sit their driver licence practical tests within 30 days of making their booking. To improve testing capacity across the country, Waka Kotahi has implemented a remedial plan with VTNZ to address recruitment and onboarding of testing officers, focussing on areas where capacity is low, and applicants are waiting in excess of 60 days.
- In Te Tai Tokerau, three Police officers have successfully completed their driver testing training and are now certified Driver Testing Officers. This means they can offer Class 1 practical testing for participants of the Far North REAP (Rural Education Activities Programme). Feedback from participants in this scheme have been positive, particularly regarding the impact that getting their licence has on their life. In addition, Kaikohe and Dargaville locals are now able to sit their practical driver's licence test closer to home and have one of New Zealand's first community driver testing officers working in their community.

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