

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	State Highway 30 Kōpaki Rail Overbridge Replacement Ribbon Cutting
Date	12 May 2023
Briefing number	BRI-2768

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone	1 st contact
David Speirs	Director Regional Relationships (Waikato/Bay of Plenty)	Section 9(2)(a)	Section 9(2)(a)	✓

Action taken by Office of the Minister

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen by Minister
- ☐ Agreed
- ☐ Feedback provided
- ☐ Forwarded to
- ☐ Needs change [please specify]
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Overtaken by events

12 May 2023

Hon Michael Wood – Minister of Transport

State Highway 30 Kōpaki Rail Overbridge Replacement Ribbon Cutting

Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with information about the Kōpaki Rail Overbridge Opening prior to the blessing and ribbon cutting on Friday, 26 May 2023, from 10am to 11am.

Project funding and costs

2. The cost for replacing the existing Kōpaki Rail Overbridge and realigning the adjacent intersection with Kōpaki Road is \$14.6 million and is funded by the National Land Transport Fund.

Project features

3. Key features of the Kōpaki Rail Overbridge Replacement include:
 - A new two-lane bridge to replace the old single lane timber bridge.
 - Realignment of State Highway 30 (SH30) and Kōpaki Road.

Project benefits

4. Key benefits of the Kōpaki Rail Overbridge Replacement include:
 - The new bridge provides a safer and more reliable connection for communities along SH30 between Te Kūiti and Maniāititi/Benneydale.
 - The new bridge is two-lanes and will be able to be used by all trucks, including heavier trucks known as high productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs).
 - The intersection of SH30 and Kōpaki Road, which was on the southern approach to the bridge, has been moved further south, providing better visibility for turning traffic and making the road safer.
 - The new bridge has been built alongside the old one, meaning SH30 has remained open to light traffic throughout the construction of the replacement.

Project context

5. The Kōpaki Rail Overbridge project was funded for replacement due to its deteriorating condition. In June 2018, a weight restriction of 80 percent of Class 1 was introduced, while steel plates were welded to the deck to allow it to remain open for light vehicles and trucks.
6. The construction of the new Kōpaki Rail Overbridge began in May 2021.

7. At the end of 2021, this weight restriction was lowered to six tonnes, due to the ongoing deterioration of the timber structure. The detour route for heavy vehicles has been to use SH3, SH4 and Kōpaki Road, adding approximately 12 kilometres to a trip along SH30.

Key messages

8. Key messages for the Kōpaki Rail Overbridge include:
 - The new Kōpaki Rail Overbridge provides a safer and more reliable connection for communities along SH30 between Te Kūiti and Maniaititi/Benneydale.
 - The Kōpaki Rail Overbridge Replacement project has realigned SH30 and the entrance to Kōpaki Road to improve safety.
 - The new two-lane bridge will be able to take heavier trucks, known as high productivity motor vehicles.

Other Matters

9. Following the introduction of the six-tonne weight restriction in late 2021, compliance from the freight industry was poor. Despite onsite signage, media releases and subsequent media articles, and direct communication with freight industry representatives, heavy trucks were observed continuing to use the bridge on a regular basis.
10. In December 2022, concerns over the strength of the bridge led to an announcement that the old bridge would close to all traffic. The negative reaction from local community, which was directed at the freight industry as much as Waka Kotahi, led to the solution of introducing a chicane of concrete barriers on the bridge approaches to physically restrict access by any vehicles larger than a car.
11. In the early stages of the project, two cultural monitors from mana whenua Rereahu were appointed, as per the conditions of consent with Waitomo District Council. Attempts to induct the two monitors onto site were unsuccessful, as were the attempts to resolve the situation. The two representatives were removed from the project, with the full support of representatives from Rereahu. No replacement cultural monitors were appointed, again with agreement from Rereahu.

You have received the following briefings on this subject:

12. #259 Weekly Report WE 1 October 2021
13. #274 Weekly Report WE 25 February 2022
14. #309 Weekly Report WE 25 November 2022

Ministerial event and ribbon cutting

15. The event will be located at Kōpaki Rail Overbridge, SH30, Kōpaki, approximately 20 minutes southeast of Te Kūiti.
16. Speeches, a blessing and a ribbon cutting ceremony will take place. This will happen on the bridge if the weather is favourable or in the nearby site office if the weather is poor.
17. Traffic management will be in place between the site and the site office to ensure the safety of the guests.

Key attendees to acknowledge

18. The key attendees invited for the Kōpaki Rail Overbridge Replacement include the following:

- Mayor John Robertson, Waitomo District Council.
- Representatives of Mana Whenua Rereahu who will conduct the pōwhiri prior to the ceremony.

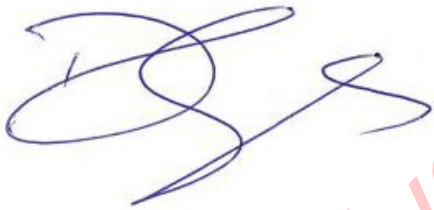
Media

19. We expect a representative of the local community paper, the King Country News, to attend.

20. The King Country News has taken a strong interest in the project, running a number of stories about the replacement and the weight restrictions mentioned above on the old bridge.

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the contents of this briefing.
2. **Forward** this briefing to Rt. Hon Adrian Rurawhe, MP for Te Tai Hauāuru.



David Speirs

Director Regional Relationships (Waikato/Bay of Plenty)

Hon Michael Wood, Minister of Transport

Date: 2023