

MINO-778 Flooding on State Highway 30

13 June 2023

Provide an update on what work Waka Kotahi is undertaking to address the concern of flooding on State Highway 30 due to rising water levels of Lake Rotoehu and Lake Rotomā.

Background

- Lake Rotoehu (nestled between Lake Rotoiti and Lake Rotomā) is currently sitting just below the highest ever recorded level since 1971.
- There are concerns that the lake will flood due to winter bringing higher rainfall and an increased number of storm events. Furthermore, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BPRC) and Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC) are concerned that Lake Rotomā could surface overflow into Lake Rotoehu.
- Roger Brady, Bay of Plenty System Manager at Waka Kotahi, attended the public meeting led by the Lakes Community Board on 1 June 2023 and advised that it was a reasonably positive meeting, given the circumstances.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

- State Highway 30 runs along the southern edge of both Lake Rotoehu and Lake Rotomā, at places right along the lake edge (particularly along the edge of Lake Rotomā for approximately 5 kilometres).
- If either of the lakes flood, State Highway 30 will likely be affected as the level of the road is below the surface overflow level into Lake Rotoehu, which could result in large stretches of state highway being under water in a flood event. The location of the road being below the potential flooding level of the lake makes it extremely difficult to mitigate flood risk to the state highway and residents below the road.
- To mitigate the risk of State Highway 30 flooding, we have ensured that the drainage network is fully operational and maintained. We have also placed rock armouring along vulnerable stretches of the road and in areas directly adjacent to the highway that are subject to wind-blown wave erosion.
- If further flooding was to occur, State Highway 30 may need to be closed to ensure the safety of road users.
- If we are required to close State Highway 30 (local roads would likely be closed also), a detour would be available via State Highway 2 and State Highway 33, which will add approximately 10 minutes to the journey time between Rotorua and Whakatāne. For those living in the area and wanting to travel to Kawerau school (east of the lakes), the detour would add approximately 80 minutes to their journey time.
- Waka Kotahi is undertaking a survey to assess the potential depth of water on the road and confirm the peak flooding depth. Based on current estimates, vehicles such as an NZ Defence Force's [Medium and](#)



Will be considered for: release in full

[Heavy Operational Vehicle](#) (MHOV) would be able to gain access along the flooded highway in an emergency.

- The BPRC is monitoring the situation closely and holds extensive data on the lakes' water levels. As the matter is currently more operational in nature, we recommend that the regional councils engage directly with Waka Kotahi in the first instance to provide a detailed overview of the situation and risk that flooding poses to the State Highway network and local residents.
- If the Minister wishes to engage with the councils on this matter, Waka Kotahi recommends engagement with the Chair/Mayor and Chief Executive of each District Council. They are:
 - Bay of Plenty Regional Council:
 - Chair, Doug Leeder
 - Chief Executive, Fiona McTavish
 - Rotorua Lakes Council:
 - Mayor, Tania Tapsell
 - Chief Executive, Geoff Williams